THE RISE OF MODERN *MYTHOLOGY*

1680–1860

BURTON FELDMAN

AND

ROBERT D. RICHARDSON

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For Peggy and for Elizabeth

WE DO NOT KNOW MUCH ABOUT GODS;

BUT HERE ARE SURELY GODDESSES.

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FOREWORD

ONE IS GRATEFUL TO PROFESSOR BURTON FELDMAN AND PROFESSOR Robert Richardson for reading so many thousands of pages of both illustrious and half-forgotten authors, and for selecting, presenting, and competently annotating the texts of this rich and illuminating anthology. Such a source book on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century myth exegesis and historiography has not existed until now; one may be confident that it will not be equalled for a long period of time.

It was to be expected that the interest in myth and mythical thought, which has expanded spectacularly in recent decades, would incite more adequate investigation into the myth historiography of the past. Understandably, attention has been concentrated on nineteenth- and twentieth-century authors: that is to say, on those authors who, following the example of Max Müller, claimed a "scientific" approach to the study of myth. (Strangely enough, we do not as yet have at our disposal a comprehensive source book of this period.)

But a great surprise awaits the reader of the present anthology. He will discover that many of the rather "modern" post-Müllerian interpretations of myth prolong, although in a different perspective, some of the theses popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It seems as if certain approaches and methodological presuppositions—for instance, the "naturalistic" or "astral," the psychological or historical, and specifically the "diffusionist" interpretations—periodically regain a more or less durable authority or, in some cases, even an unexpected vogue. Authors denouncing myth and mythical thinking as "irrational" abound in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as well as in modern times (for example, Andrew Lang, Wilhelm Schmidt, Émile Durkheim, Freud, and others). Likewise, the old and venerable opinion that the myths contain noble and elevated ideas or conceal scientifically correct descriptions of cosmic structures and norms is periodically reformulated. Thus, for example, at the beginning of our century E. Siecke and E. Stucken enthusiastically reactualized the central interpretation of the world mythologies. Siecke protested against the "rationalistic" depreciation of myth. Against E. B. Tylor, he emphatically stated that myths do not reflect animistic experiences and conceptions; they have nothing to do with belief in the soul, or with dreams and nightmares. Myths, argued Siecke, must be understood literally, because their contents always refer to specific celestial phenomena.

Stucken went even further. In his three-volume work, *Astralmythen* (Leipzig, 1896–1907), he tried to prove the direct or indirect Mesopotamian origin of all the mythologies of the world. For Stucken, as for the majority of pan-Babylonianists, all myths are concerned with the movements of the sun, the moon, and the planet Venus. Celestial revolutions were regarded by the Mesopotamians as the expression of the power, will, and intelligence of the deities. As early as 3000 B.C. this system had been completely developed in Mesopotamia, from which it was then diffused over the whole earth, being found even today in the myths of the "primitives." The pan-Babylonianists saw evidence of this diffusion in the astronomical knowledge implied in every mythological system. Such scientific observations, they argued, were certainly impossible for archaic peoples.

Thus, Siecke, Stucken, and the pan-Babylonianists linked the *naturalistic* origin of myths with their *historical* diffusion. Against the supporters of animism and of the theory of "elementary ideas" of Bastian, who explained the similarity of myths by the basic unity of the human mind, the pan-Babylonianists emphasized the highly elevated, "scientific" origin of mythology and its diffusion even among the most primitive tribes. One recognizes in this theory the prolongation of the astral interpretations of myths proposed by such men as Abbé Pluche (*Histoire du Ciel,* Paris, 1739) and Dupuis (*Mémoire sur l'origine des constellations et sur l'explication de la fable par le moyen de l'astronomie,* Paris, 1777–81). But, of course, these eighteenth-century authors were, in their turn, only correcting and improving the Neoplatonic exegesis of late antiquity.

But the interest of the texts collected in the present anthology is not limited to such examples of "continuity and change" in the understanding of mythology and mythical thinking. A close reading of these seventeenth- to nineteenth-century writers is revealing for the history of the Western mind. As has been abundantly illustrated in the present century, the evaluation of myth goes together with a specific understanding of religion and, accordingly, with a specific conception of man. After the collapse of Max Müller's solar mythology and of his *nomina-numina* theory, that is, of his explanation of myth as a "disease of language," most of the scholars writing between 1880 and 1920 considered myth as a secondary product, namely, as a verbal explication and justification of ritual. As Jane Harrison stated with regard to the ancient Greeks, *mythos* was primarily "just a thing spoken, uttered by the *mouth*"; its correlative was "the thing done, enacted, the *ergon* or work." Thirty years earlier, while investigating the origin and growth of Semitic religion, W. Robertson Smith had emphatically declared that "the myth was derived from the ritual, and not the ritual from the myth."

But proclaiming the myth "secondary" was not without consequences for the general evaluation of religion. All these authors tacitly took for granted that

the primary and fundamental element of religion, and hence of human culture, is the *act* done by man, not the *story* of divine activity. Freud accepted these presuppositions, but he decided to push them much further: he identified in the "primeval murder" the primordial unique *act* which established the human condition, and consequently opened the way to religious and mythical creations.

The priority of ritual is no longer unanimously accepted today, and we witness again a stimulating tension between the partisans of "in the beginning was the *word*" and those who hold that "in the beginning" was the *act*. It would be a fascinating inquiry to decipher and investigate corresponding analogous tensions among the authors presented in this anthology. Of course, one can easily distinguish the "rationalists" and agnostics (Voltaire, Bayle, etc.) from the "illuminists," "occultists," and romantics (Pernety, Novalis, Schelling, etc.): the first group disparaging, the second group exalting the myth and mythical thought. But all these writers were nevertheless the heirs of the Greek and Judaeo-Christian understanding of *mythos* as fable or fiction, opposed to both *logos* and *historia.* Accordingly, Swedenborgians, illuminists, and occultists alike tried valiantly to defend the value of myth by elucidating its secret allegories and disclosing its profound symbolic meaning. It was only recently that, thanks to the work of three generations of anthropologists, the Western world has discovered that in archaic and traditional cultures the myth represents a sacred and *true* story, and constitutes the exemplary model for all significant human activities. Thus, only recently has one been able to speak of the *truth* of myth, that is, of its meaning, function, and power, while acknowledging its fictional character on the plane of cosmic or historical realities.

Consequently, it is no wonder that both the "rationalists" and the "illuminists" and romantics paid almost no attention to a number of supposedly well-known historical facts. Indeed, some of the rationalists and skeptics, like Voltaire and Bayle, went very far in their criticism of religion in general and Judaeo-Christianity in particular; but none of them suspected the mythical structure of other, more recent phenomena. Among these were many powerful and highly significant collective movements, popular enthusiasms, and millenaristic and apocalyptic systems, such as the doctrine of Antichrist and the Last Emperor, the eschatological theology of history of Gioacchino di Fiore and his prophecy of the imminent third *regnum,* the Angelic Pope and the *Renovatio mundi,* the Children's Crusade, the mythology of Frederick II, cosmocrator and cosmic Messiah who was supposed to bind the elements of the universe together, or even the esoteric mythology provoked by the rediscovery of the *Corpus hermeticum,* the millenarian implications of Giordano Bruno's heliocentrism, and the mystico-political prophecies of Campanella and Guillaume Postel. How important these messianic and prophetic movements

were for the mediaeval and Renaissance Western world, how powerful their appeal was for all social classes, and how superbly *mythical* their structures were—we now begin to realize after the researches of K. Burdach, E. Kantorowicz, E. Buonaiuti, A. Dupront, and many others; it suffices to recall such books as *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (1957) by Norman Cohn, *Concordia Mundi* (1957) by W. Bousma, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (1964) by Frances A. Yates, or *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study of Joachimism* (1969) by Marjorie Reeves.

We would like to know how our "rationalist" and "illuminist" or "occultist" authors would have judged the value and meaning of myth if they could have investigated *these* mediaeval and Renaissance mythologies. But, of course, they were trained to consider all such material as being simply popular superstitions, heresies, or, worse, fanatical, and thus spiritually irrelevant, movements. When they analyzed and discussed the "myths," our authors opened their Homer and Ossian; or they enthusiastically devoured the memoirs of travelers and missionaries, or the newly discovered (and badly translated) Asiatic texts, or the remains of Teutonic mythology.

But, in spite of their limitations, how refreshing and illuminating are their writings! The compilers of the present anthology are to be congratulated for bringing them again to light.

MIRCEA ELIADE

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INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK IS A CRITICAL HISTORY, WITH EXTENSIVE DOCUMENTATION, of the rise and development of interest in myth from the early eighteenth century through the middle of the nineteenth century. What prompts such a volume is our sense that a reassessment of this period's contribution to the study of myth is long overdue—both for its intrinsic worth and for its decisive part in shaping twentieth-century views of myth. We hope to make clear that our own century's fascination with myth is part of a broader movement which spreads and intensifies from post-Renaissance times to our own. And, if only implicitly, we wish to suggest that the remarkable impact of such modern mythologists as Tylor or Frazer, Freud or Jung, Malinowski or Cassirer or others has partly contributed to but also importantly derived from the relative neglect of what has been said and thought about myth in the century and a half after 1700. One of our aims here is to redress this neglect, and to show that contemporary mythologizing is an indivisible part of a tradition—one that has become increasingly obscured. But our main interest is to try to demonstrate that this early modern work on myth is worth studying for its own sake: that from around 1700 to around 1860, theorists, scholars, and artists formulated and elaborated ideas that constitute a watershed in which radically new views of myth emerged and continue to emerge. And these may help to illuminate—from an unusual but nonetheless central viewpoint—some of the much-debated shifts in taste and thought described under such rubrics as the movement from neoclassic to romantic, or some of the problems involving, for example, primitivism, nationalism, or historicism. To remedy neglect, but convinced too that this early modern mythology can still show itself directly persuasive and interesting, we have given over a sizable part of this volume to documents. No comparable collection of texts on myth from this period exists; several of these texts have not appeared before in English, and even in the original languages and editions many of these are available only in very large or specialized libraries. Many of these texts are indeed widely and easily available, but their original concern with and importance for mythology is often overlooked: it is not usually remembered that Hume or Isaac Newton or Marx were also mythologists.

Some of the main reasons for reopening the study of early modern mythology begin with the recognition that the current study of myth seems unfortunately

fragmented. Literary people will be more likely to know about Sir James Frazer, Jesse Weston, and Northrop Frye than to value or be intimately acquainted with Bronislaw Malinowski, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, or Claude Levi-Strauss. Psychological approaches to myth, such as those of Sigmund Freud or Carl Jung, remain apart from the symbolic-linguistic approaches of Ernst Cassirer or Suzanne Langer. The folklorist, such as Stith Thompson or Richard Dorson, shares material or approaches only in very small part with the historian of religion, such as Mircea Eliade; and a comparative mythologist, such as Joseph Campbell, will not necessarily share the same ground with a theologian, such as Rudolph Bultmann.

Existing histories of the study of myth reflect this fragmentation or specialization. Richard Chase's *The Quest for Myth* operates upon literary assumptions; Jan de Vries's *The Study of Religion* and his *Forschungsgeschichte der Mythologie* consider myth a subject for the historian of religion, as does Pinard de la Boullaye's *L'Étude comparée des Religions;* while Frank Manuel's *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* relates myth to broader eighteenth-century ideas about religion. Two recent symposia, Henry Murray's *Myth and Mythmaking* and Thomas Sebeok's *Myth: a Symposium,* have amply shown the range and diversity of modern approaches to myth, but offer no compelling reasons for preferring some theories to others.

One might conclude from this that myth is not a coherent subject; or that myth is in fact susceptible of several, perhaps many, approaches, even contradictory ones; or that there is a certain amount of confusion in the current study of myth. Since it is clear that myth is important to our century, and has been important for quite some time, we decided to examine the rise of the modern interest in myth, starting as far back as seemed necessary and proceeding on the assumption that no single theory or approach or definition or even attitude would be favored over any other. The period from 1680 to 1860 is, as we hope to show, the crucial one for an understanding of modern thought on myth; and this volume will try to show that almost every major theory about myth has roots and counterparts in that period. Indeed, we will suggest—indirectly, but with a sense of challenge—that almost every major approach to myth now in use was either originated, developed, or strongly foreshadowed during the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century.

The period from 1680 to 1860 is central to the study of modern myth for a variety of reasons. The end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth saw the rise and triumph of a rational spirit of inquiry, produced a flood of travel narratives revealing new customs and manners and myths, and saw the rise of deism and natural religion and the related attack on Christianity via the attack on pagan myth. It also witnessed the rise of the historical spirit and the rise of the comparative method of inquiry. All these factors encouraged and even demanded a complete reinvestigation of pagan

myth, for it appeared to be related to religious truth, prehistory, current savage ideas and practices, and philosophical and artistic expression of contemporaneous ideas. Later, from the middle of the eighteenth century on, myth became increasingly caught up in the movement usually characterized as romanticism. Myth was restudied, radically revalued, and widely applied to practical ends in art, religion, history, and social theory. The revival of interest in the folk, the primitive, the archaic, and the heroic all fed the interest in myth. Then too, myth often became, for the nineteenth-century artist, a great source of new energy and power.

Around 1700, the term *myth* meant mainly the inherited body of myths, principally Greek and Roman; but this was gradually enlarged to include Indic, Nordic, African, and indeed all mythologies, ancient and modern. Secondly, myth was often associated during this period with pagan religious beliefs and was contrasted with Christian religious belief; a most interesting shift took place as the nineteenth century came to respect or approve the nature-based polytheism of the now noble Greeks instead of treating it as "heathen idolatry." Myth also meant—or involved—the study of myth, or mythography. And increasingly during the first half of the nineteenth century, myth came to take on two additional meanings. Myth came to be thought of as a creative process, a mode of the imagination usually expressed via art or literature. Myth also came to have a religious quality. No longer simply derogated as pagan and therefore false, myth came to be seen as the inner vivifying principle in all religion, and that inner life became, happily, accessible to art again for perhaps the first time since the Renaissance. Myth even became a new way of redeeming modern man by seeking to restore him to his original oneness with nature and by reacquainting him with that oneness, with his own best self, or with divinity.

Indeed, one way to characterize this whole period is to say that before about 1700 myth was largely confined to ancient pagan mythologies and was a subordinate or secondary study, rarely studied for itself and not considered important in its own right. It might seem that the opposite has been true of the scholarly study of myth from the mid-nineteenth century to the present: myth has formed part of the modern fields of anthropology, literary criticism, folklore, psychology, and history of religion. And yet in our time myth has less and less been treated as a subject in itself. But from the Enlightenment down through the first half of the nineteenth century, myth was widely and increasingly thought of as a primary subject, even a synoptic one, a master field of the first importance. Myth was taken up because it was thought of as a key, variously, to history, to linguistics and philology, to religion, to art, to the primitive mind, and to the creative imagination. Rather than claiming, as we tend to do now, that one's own field or discipline can illuminate mythology, scholars during the period from 1680 to 1860 tended to think, or to hope,

that mythology would illuminate other fields around it. In various ways, Vico, Herder, Creuzer, K. O. Müller, and F. Max Müller share this point of view.

From 1680 to 1860, mythology grew from a concern with Greek, Roman, and at times, Egyptian myth into a concern with all myth. New mythologies were found in India, in China, in Persia, in Scandinavia, in Germany, in Africa, and in the New World. From bodies of myth, the writers and scholars of the time went on to consider the myth-making mind and to seek for the principles governing myths. As myth came to be considered more and more as a mode of thought or imagination and less and less as merely a body of knowledge about old stories, it was eagerly taken up by romantic writers in England, Germany, France, America, and elsewhere. By the mid-nineteenth century, the triumph of what might be called romantic conceptions of myth was notable in literature, religion, language study, and historical study.

Perhaps its very range, its interdisciplinary spread, as we would call it, led to the fragmentation of myth study by the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Myth had become important to a number of rapidly growing and increasingly narrow fields; but as a serious subject, myth had been unintentionally discredited by such puerile but popular compilations as Bulfinch's *The Age of Fable* and by the many books and essays of the widely esteemed F. Max Müller and his numerous followers. Thus mythology disappeared as the central or synoptic study that it had been with, say, Karl Otfried Müller, and became only a branch of each of half a dozen different academic fields. But within these fields, from the mid-nineteenth century on, myth study has continued at an ever-accelerating pace; and while the developments have not always kept track of each other, the major work is all easily available and need not take up space in this work.

Another reason for concentrating on the period from 1680 to 1860 is, as noted, that all the important modern approaches to myth may fairly seem to have been anticipated in one way or another during that time. The folklore approaches to myth may be seen in the work of the brothers Grimm, and in England, in the books of Thomas Keightley. Linguistic approaches to myth have a longer history, going back to the seventeenth-century etymological researches of Kircher, Bochart, and Fourmont, and coming down through students of language, such as Sir William Jones and Robert Lowth, to scholarly philologians, such as Heyne and F. Max Müller. The existential approach to myth was prefigured in Schelling; the racist use of myth, in Gobineau. Archetype criticism appears to have an early analogue, if not source, in biblical typology, and it can be seen reaching into myth study in our period in the works of Andrew Ramsay and George Faber. Symbolism as an approach to myth can be seen in the works of Herder, Goethe, Moritz, Creuzer, and the latter's followers. The modern myth work of biblical criticism and theology was prefigured and prepared by Lowth, by Eichhorn, and by D. F. Strauss. An interest in

myth as an aid to historical study, and even as history itself, can be traced in Vico, in Fréret, in Gibbon, in Karl Otfried Müller, in Michelet, and in Quinet. Early monomythographers or monomythologists include such Christian apologists as Fourmont and Faber, as well as such non-Christian synthesizers as Charles Dupuis and F. Max Müller. Psychological theories of myth may be seen in Fontenelle, Trenchard, Hume, and in many of the German romantics. Anthropological approaches were anticipated by Lafitau, De Brosses, and R. P. Knight.

The recent study of myth, then, is perhaps less novel than it sometimes appears. And it is one object of this work to show that a wider acquaintance with earlier thought on myth will substantially illuminate our own modern concern with the subject.

The importance of, yet difficulty of access to, this material has in large part dictated our approach in this volume. Originally, a critical anthology had been projected: representative readings, with minimum notes. But the nature of our subject forced us to recast this plan, and to expand the critical and historical material radically. For one thing, the interest in myth in the period considered here spreads over every and any area, scholarly, religious, philosophical, anthropological, artistic. It was as enthusiastically taken up in England or Germany or France or America; it had many famous and also many quite obscure devotees; it often exhibited the less familiar side of famous minds (Isaac Newton or Gibbon, for example), or showed otherwise marginal figures participating genuinely in a mainstream of thought. This ferment and diversity of interest in myth is stimulated by, moves through, and cuts across almost every climate and movement of thought in the hundred and fifty or so years here considered. Although deep affinities or cores of agreement exist, the fluidity, flexibility, and eclecticism frustrate any effort to extract very neat positions or programs. This period's interest in myth offers almost a surfeit of riches. Thus, the texts given seemed to demand a substantial amount of preparatory historical comment and continuity; and yet the natural evolution of the subject had to be sustained. Our solution has been to give as much background and interpretation as seemed useful, whether biographical, historical, or philosophical, but placed as closely as possible to the actual texts.

Such an organization has the advantage of imposing and intruding our own biases or shortsightedness on any figure as little as possible. On the other hand, of course, to proceed from figure to figure means that a continuous narrative thread of history and description cannot be maintained. The advantages of the former seemed to us to far outweigh the disadvantages of the latter. One more disadvantage: the figures we take up are obviously likely to have been those who mainly wrote, theorized, or created, rather than those who explored or did important practical work: thus, our study scants archaeologists, field anthropologists, or philologists. But we must plead that this is a study of

attitudes, interest in and thought about myth in this period. In another way, this volume might have been called a study of the rise of modern mythography, that is, the historiography of mythology. But the term mythography is not sufficiently inclusive. It does not, for example, cover the *uses* of myth, such as the interest a poet takes in myth when he tries to turn ancient or received myths to new poetic account or when he seeks to grasp the inner principles or crucial experiences of myth itself, and so create new myth. Nor is mythography usually thought to include the interest in myth shown by theology, philology, anthropology, history, and classics. If myth and mythology are somewhat looser terms, they are also more inclusive; and one of the key aspects of interest taken in myth by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is the comprehensiveness and many-sidedness of myth.

T. S. Eliot once said that his study of Indian religion had brought him only to a state of enlightened ignorance. We may claim as much here. Our efforts to find in contemporary mythology a confident angle of departure or vision from which to synthesize our findings about myth soon foundered. The various and alluring mythologic persuasions of our own time—psychological, anthropological, literary, structuralist, history of religions, each sometimes derogatory of myth, sometimes nothing less than chthonic—are likely to send the unwary researcher back only to some eighteenth- or nineteenth-century version or root of a current position. We hoped to avoid this, and also to avoid here that too familiar phenomenon of contemporary interest in myth, that passionate and even learned bias toward some facet or other of myth as the true key or royal road. Certainly, as much was often true of the *philosophes* or romantics with their various certainties and enthusiasms. But even though alert to the dangers of such bias, our enlightened perplexity was only compounded since, as we moved back a century or so, we found all the same positions seemingly reappearing, if in different guise and with different data. The problem confronting the student of myth in the face of the richness and confusion of our time turns out to be the same problem found during the Enlightenment and romantic period. All the possible positions seem already there, only some dominant, some subdued: Blackwell was at the same time a "scientific" historian, a promoter of a sociologic view of myth, and a dedicated Orphist; that urbane *philosophe,* Fontenelle, very early saw most of the possible questions mythic interpretation might pose, including some arch-romantic ones, though he would not stay for an answer; Herder had much of the deist in his ardencies about the *Volk,* and even Marx occasionally sounded like Schelling or Friedrich Schlegel. If there is a conclusion to be reached here, it might be a quite tentative yet difficult one: that modern mythology—recent and earlier—is in urgent need of radical philosophic and historical examination of its own tradition, accomplishments, and presuppositions.

Inevitably, there have been omissions here, some deliberate, some unnoticed

or undreamt. This study deliberately stops short of the recent modern period, which we set as beginning around 1860; the sufficient reason, we hope, is that the excited and many-sided mythologizing of our own period would require a companion volume, but is probably familiar enough to need no such exhumation of texts as attempted here. Within our period, for example, Swedenborg might have been included on his own merit and as an influence on Blake, Emerson, and others. Besides Marx, Comte or Saint-Simon or Bakunin or Bruno Bauer deserve extended attention. Certainly more could have been said about Hegel's view of myth, and particularly his interest in Creuzer's theories. Thomas Taylor, the influential Neoplatonist and translator of Plato, also merits much more examination. As much is true of Wilhelm von Humboldt and especially Alexander von Humboldt. If we were redoing this book, we would explore much more extensively the mythologic theories of the Illuminists, the alchemists, and the near-mythopoetic "cult of Reason" which flourished during the French Revolution. As much is true of lesser figures such as Lobeck, the great opponent of Creuzer, or Champollion and his work on hieroglyphs, or Émeric-David, the French eclectic. Or Hans Christian Andersen. Considering the omission of these and many others—in music, in painting and sculpture, in the mythology of the Far East—we can only argue that we had to stop somewhere, hoping for the best that our selections were most representative or important or both.

SECONDARY SOURCES

The following works have been found especially helpful for the study of myth as treated in our period: The list, confined to books published since 1860, is a brief selection of modern scholarship which can provide an initial yet broad survey of the subject. The bibliographies in these works also provide a starting point for further introduction into the proliferation of modern research and thought on myth. For texts from the period 1680 to 1860, see our primary bibliography; for works relating to specific topics or figures, see our separate bibliographical entries to each section.

Pinard de la Boullaye, S. J., *L'Étude comparée des Religions,* 2 vols. (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1922) compactly and extensively provides a history of research and theorizing on religion and myth. Douglas Bush, *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937) gives a most detailed account of English poetic use of Greek and Roman mythic themes, but restricts itself to this. Richard Chase, *Quest for Myth* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949) is a brief, enthusiastic but partisan account of some main mythologic positions, arguing for a view of myth as literature. Jan de Vries, *Forschungsgeschichte der Mythologie* (Freiburg and Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1961) surveys

mythology from ancient times to the present, gives descriptions and brief texts, and is openly sympathetic with certain romantic viewpoints; the rationalist period is somewhat scanted. Richard M. Dorson, *The British Folklorists. A History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968) offers a rich sampling of texts from early folklorists.

Otto Gruppe, *Geschichte der klassischen Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte während des Mittelalters im Abendland und während der Neuzeit* (Supplement to *Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie,* ed. W. H. Roscher) (Leipzig, 1921): a monument of historical scholarship, with brief accounts and bibliographies of hundreds of mythologists from classical times to date of writing, and the single most useful reference work for the study of myth. Gruppe, however, excludes all mythic thought not primarily scholarly or theoretical. Christian Hartlich and Walter Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes in der Modernen Bibelwissenschaft* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1952) is the best account of how modern "demythologizing" descends from eighteenth-century mythology and Bible criticism. M. J. and F. S. Herskovits, "Introduction" in *Dahomean Narrative* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1958) gives a condensed but wide survey of thinking about myth with anthropological study in mind. Erik Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs* (Copenhagen, 1961) for a sweeping history of mythologic interest in Egypt, and especially good on the Egyptology of such seventeenth-century figures as Kircher.

Frank Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959) views the Enlightenment from the perspective of its absorbed interest in myth and religion, from Fontenelle through the earliest work of Herder. Arnaldo Momigliano, *Studies in Historiography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), especially the first chapter distinguishing between *érudit* and *philosophe* mentality and approach to myth. Martin Nilsson, *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion,* 2 vols. (Munich, 1941), a standard work. R. Pettazoni, *Svolgimento e carrattere della storia delle religioni* (Bari: Laterza, 1924), a classic work in history of religion. Charles Picard, *Les religions préhistoriques* (Paris, 1948). P. D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte,* 2 vols. (Freiburg, 1887), especially Volume I on mythology; trans. English, 1891. Raymond Schwab, *La Renaissance orientale* (Paris: Payot, 1950), an indispensable survey of European interest in India and Persia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Fritz Strich, *Die Mythologie in der deutschen Literatur von Klopstock bis Wagner,* 2 vols. (Halle, 1910): German literary interest in myth, wide coverage but poorly bibliographed. A. Leslie Willson, *A Mythical-Image: The ideal of India in German Romanticism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1964), especially good for an account of the impact of newly discovered mythology on an important literary movement.

Standard modern reference and dictionary works are excluded here; besides being readily available, most of these scant or ignore the scholarship of our earlier period. For this reason, acquaintance with such great older standard reference works as those of Charles Anthon, *A Classical Dictionary* (1841) or of Sir William Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* (1844–1849) are preferable to most current examples. Attention should be directed to an exemplary modern work dealing with our subject and period: Herbert Hunger, *Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie* (Vienna: Verlag Brüder Hollinek, 1959) which is at once an encyclopedia of classical myths but also of the detailed use of these from ancient to modern times in literature, theater, music, painting, opera, and sculpture.

account of Müller's approach to myth.

Comparative philology gave rise to the idea that, just as there was a common language—Latin—lying behind and explaining many of the peculiarities of romance languages, so there was a common language—Aryan—lying behind Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, Zend, Celtic, and Gothic. Aryan was the mother tongue of the human race, "a living language," wrote Müller, "spoken in Asia by a small tribe, nay, originally by a small family living under one and the same roof." This language, Müller argued, was incapable of abstractions, so, at an early period, the Aryans took to naming things as best they could. This, for Müller, is the mythopoeic age. The Aryans were more impressed by the dawn and the sun and the darkness than they were with anything else in nature, and they turned their awkward language to describing dawns and sunsets. "Where we speak of the sun following the dawn, the ancient poets could only speak and think of the Sun loving and embracing the dawn. What is with us a sunset, was to them the Sun growing old, decaying or dying. Our sunrise was to them the Night giving birth to a brilliant child." In this early mythopoeic era, then, all language was myth; "every one of these common Aryan words is, in a certain sense, a myth," and the great majority of the Aryan words that Müller identified had to do with solar events.

After the mythopoeic era, the Aryan people split into nations, dispersed, and evolved new languages. The old words describing dawns and sunsets remained, but were no longer understood. So new and often wild or ugly stories (myths) were invented to explain the old names, and we thus have myths piled on myths. Comparative mythology undertook to work back from the Greek or Latin or Indian myths to their supposed Aryan roots, and from the Aryan roots tried to identify the solar event originally signified. Müller found the Vedas, particularly the *Rig-Veda,* to be the oldest and best clues to this Aryan mythology and myth-language, and he could trace most Greek myths to one or another Aryan root for sun or dawn or night.

As Müller worked it out then, myth was, in his famous phrase, a "disease of language." The original Aryan myth-word was a clumsy and misleading attempt to name a natural event. When later the name and the event had become separated, and a story was made up by, for example, the Greeks, to explain a name, this only compounded the problem. This slippage between words and things is inherent in all language to some degree, Müller claims. We are always in the process of mythmaking, and the only corrective is comparative philology, conceived of as a sort of scientific etymology or as the archaeology of language.

From the nature-filled language of the Vedas, and from the sort of Victorian sensibility one can see in Müller's novel *Deutsche Liebe* (a much read and widely translated romance about a studious youth and a lovely but ill princess and their ideal and hopeless love), came impulses that only reinforced Müller's tendency toward an excessively genteel set of mind. And the idea of the Absolute, or the Ideal, which had played so important a part in German mythic theory, became, in Müller's hands, only a pale wishfulness, an ethereal unworldliness.

Little of this was new, except perhaps the tone; Müller's vast philological erudition was largely in the service of old ideas. The disease of language theory had been touched on by Fontenelle and had been advanced by many eighteenth-century writers on myth. The Aryan hypothesis too is only a late and secular version of the Christian and deist theories that spoke of an early period of truth and simplicity followed by a period of dispersal and degeneration. The celestial or solar explanation was advanced not only

FRIEDRICH MAX MÜLLER

[1823–1900]

F. MAX MÜLLER dominated the study of myth during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, and has thus become a convenient starting place for accounts of modern mythography. The unlikely combination in his work of hard-headed, complex, erudite philology and the dreamy, rhapsodic reduction of all myth to silly locutions for sunrise and sunset ("Another magnificent sunset looms in the myth of the death of Heracles") made Müller an easy target, for he could be seen as a mighty scholar-fool, an example of how benighted myth study was in the mid-nineteenth century. The great Victorian solar mythologist is, however, more interesting than that, and Müller's work explains a great deal about what has happened to the study of myth since the 1850s.

Müller was first a student at Leipzig, where he heard Hermann and Brockhaus, then at Berlin, where he heard Bopp and Schelling. He took his doctorate at nineteen and published a translation of the *Hitopadésa* at twenty. He went to Paris to work under Eugène Burnouf in 1845, came to England during the Revolution of 1848, was appointed Taylorian Professor of Modern Languages at Oxford in 1850, and spent the rest of his life in England. His career rolled on, checked only by his losing the election to the Chair of Sanskrit in 1860 to Sir Monier Monier-Williams. One of Müller's friends, A. A. Macdonnell, claims that the loss of this chair was such a great disappointment that it deflected Müller from solid Sanskrit scholarship into other fields, such as comparative mythology, and that Müller's writings in those fields won him much acclaim, but at the expense of solid scholarly achievement. However this may have been, Müller did introduce, advance, and popularize in England the newly related fields of comparative philology and comparative mythology, in addition to editing the multivolume *Sacred Books of the East*. Müller's writings on mythology are very numerous, though his approach is already fully expressed in the celebrated book-length essay *Comparative Mythology*, published in 1856. Other works range from an essay on "Bellerophon" (1855), which is a showpiece of the philological method, to the *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (1873), to the final gathering up of his work on myth in *Contributions to the Science of Mythology* (1897) and many other essays and books.

F. Max Müller's work on myth has been discussed both recently and well. Richard Dorson, in *The British Folklorists*, has placed Müller with reference to Tylor, Lang, and the rise of anthropology and folklore; Jan de Vries, in *The Study of Religion*, has discussed Müller's works in the light of subsequent developments in philology and linguistics; and Richard Chase, in *The Quest for Myth*, has focussed on the one-sidedness of the genteel solar explanation of myth. What follows then is only intended as a supplementary

account of Müller's approach to myth.

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Little of this was new, except perhaps the tone; Müller's vast philological erudition was largely in the service of old ideas. The disease of language theory had been touched on by Fontenelle and had been advanced by many eighteenth-century writers on myth. The Aryan hypothesis too is only a late and secular version of the Christian and deist theories that spoke of an early period of truth and simplicity followed by a period of dispersal and degeneration. The celestial or solar explanation was advanced not only

by Pluche, but by Dupuis, while the philological method was borrowed from Grimm. Müller's counterpart in Germany, Adelbert Kuhn, whose *Die Herabkunft des Feuers* appeared in 1859, had worked out an approach similar to Müller's (just whose work came first is not clear) in all respects except that thunder and lightning lie at the heart of the explanation instead of sunrise and sunset.

Müller's influence was very great, despite the lack of originality. Cox took up Müller's ideas, and instead of philology, simply used plot analogies to connect similar stories until he emerged with the discovery that all myths are the same myth and tell the same story. Tylor adopted Müller's theories about myth, and Robert Brown applied Müller's approach to uncovering Semitic origins, rather than Aryan. Angelo de Gubernatis's *Zoological Mythology* (1872) makes use of Müller, as does the work of Ignaz Goldzieher. Richard Dorson has treated most of these figures in *The British Folklorists* and he has argued that Müller's greatest antagonist was Andrew Lang. Müller defended a degeneration theory, while Lang espoused a theory based on evolutionary anthropology. To Lang, myths were vestiges of savage totemism. Both arguments work to belittle myth, and neither argument includes any serious religious element. Müller seemed to have lost the battle to Lang, but Dorson claims that it was Lang who gave ground in the end.

Today, Müller's work seems suspect just on the face of it. It strains credulity to find a supposedly disinterested and scientific philological method leading again and again only to new ways of saying the sun kisses the dawn. And to say that Niobe is the snow, and that her tears express the sun melting the snow, no longer seems a full account of the myth. Indeed such reductionist extravagances led others to parody Müller's method; one such is R. F. Littledale's "The Oxford Solar Myth," printed by A. Smythe Palmer in his 1909 edition of Müller's *Comparative Mythology*. Littledale proves conclusively, in the manner of the day, that F. Max Müller is himself the sun.

Müller substituted nature rhapsodies for religious emotion, he substituted a wan ideal for ideas of Divinity, and he substituted a theory of linguistic debasement and degeneration for history. And if the results seem today pale and insubstantial, it should be remembered that in his emphasis on nature and on wonder, in his conviction that kinship names were of the utmost importance, and in his adherence to a linguistic method, he was a harbinger of the future. Nor is his work all narrow. He could write, in "On the Philosophy of Mythology" (1871), "Mythology, in the highest sense, is the power exercized by language on thought in every possible sphere of mental activity; and I do not hesitate to call the whole history of Philosophy, from Thales down to Hegel, an uninterrupted battle against mythology, a constant protest of thought against language."

Müller's work is then an integrative effort, but an unfortunate one, for when he was done with mythology it was stripped of belief, separated from religion, and divested of narrative, poetic, and imaginative interest. Müller's lack of interest in archaeology, in history, and in the fine arts, and his exclusive reliance on language, which even he at last distrusted, narrowed his work disastrously and he was left crying up the study of mythology while he trivialized myth itself.

R.R.

REFERENCES The text is from F. Max Müller, *Comparative Mythology*, ed. A. Smythe Palmer (New York: Dutton [1909]). See also *Chips from a German Workshop* (New York, 1885) Vol. 2. In addition to the works cited

above, see Müller's *Collected Works* (London, 1898, etc.) and *The Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879–1910) 50 vols. translated by various Oriental scholars and edited by F. Max Müller. See also *The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Friedrich Max Müller* (London, 1902) 2 vols., edited by his wife.

Recent work on Müller includes Jan de Vries, *The Study of Religion* (New York, 1967) and Richard Chase, *The Quest for Myth* (Baton Rouge, 1949). See especially Richard Dorson, *The British Folklorists* (Chicago, 1968), "The Mythological Folklorists." Dorson has also reprinted a large excerpt from "Comparative Mythology" in his *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths* (Chicago, 1968) and has described the conflict between Lang and Müller in "The Eclipse of Solar Mythology" in Thomas Sebeok, *Myth, a Symposium* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958).

F. Max Müller

FROM *Comparative Mythology*

In these legends the Greek language supplies almost all that is necessary in order to render these strange stories intelligible and rational, through the later Greeks —I mean Homer and Hesiod, had certainly in most cases no suspicion of the original import of their own traditions. But as there are Greek words which find no explanation in Greek, and which, without a reference to Sanskrit and the other cognate dialects, would have for ever remained to the philologist mere sounds with a conventional meaning, there are also names of gods and heroes inexplicable, from a Greek point of view, and which cannot be made to disclose their primitive character, unless confronted with contemporary witnesses from India, Persia, Italy, or Germany. Another myth of the dawn will best explain this:—

Ahan in Sanskrit is a name of the day, and is said to stand for dahan, like asru, tear, for dasru, δάκρυ. Whether we have to admit an actual loss of this initial d, or whether the d is to be considered rather as a secondary letter, by which the root ah was individualised to dah, is a question which does not concern us at present. In Sanskrit we have the root dah, which means, to burn, and from which a name of the day might have been formed in the same manner as dyu—day, is formed from dyu, to be brilliant. Nor does it concern us here, whether the Gothic *dags,* day, is the same word or not. According to Grimm's law, *daha,* in Sanskrit, should in Gothic appear as *taga,* and not as *daga.* However, there are several of the old common Aryan names in which Grimm's law is violated, and Bopp seems inclined to consider daga and daha identical in origin. Certain it is that the same root from which the Teutonic words for *day* are formed, has also given rise to the name for dawn. In German we say 'der Morgen *tagt,*' and in Old English day was *dawe,* while to dawn was in Anglo-Saxon *dagian.* Now, in the *Veda,* one of the names of the dawn is Ahanâ. It occurs only once, *Rv.* i. 123, 4.

Gṛihám gṛiham Ahanâ' yâti ákkha
Divédive ádhi nâ'ma dádhânâ
Sísâsantí Dyotanâ' *sásvat* â' agât
A'gram agram ít bhagate vásûnâm.

'Ahanâ (the dawn) comes near to every house—she who makes every day to be known.

'Dyotanâ (the dawn), the active maiden, comes back for evermore—she enjoys always the first of all goods.'

We have already seen the Dawn in various relations to the Sun, but not yet as the beloved of the Sun, flying before her lover, and destroyed by his embrace. This, however, was a very familiar expression in the old mythological language of the Aryans. The Dawn has died in the arms of the Sun, or the Dawn is flying before the Sun, or the Sun has shattered the car of the Dawn, were expressions meaning simply the sun has risen—the dawn is gone. Thus, we read in the *Rv.* iv. 30, in a hymn celebrating the achievements of Indra, the chief solar diety of the Veda—

'And this strong and manly deed also thou has performed. O Indra, that thou struckest the daughter of Dyaus (the Dawn), a woman difficult to vanquish.

'Yes, even the daughter of Dyaus, the magnified, the Dawn, thou, O Indra, a great hero, hast ground to pieces.

'The Dawn rushed off from her crushed car, fearing that Indra, the bull, might strike her.

'This her car lay there well ground to pieces; she went far away.'

In this case, Indra behaves rather unceremoniously to the daughter of the sky; but, in other places, she is loved by all the bright gods of heaven, not excluding her own father. The Sun, it is said, *Rv.* i. 115, 2, follows her from behind, as a man follows a woman. 'She, the Dawn, whose cart is drawn by white horses, is carried away in triumph by the two Aśvins,'—as the Leukippides are carried off by Dioskuroi.

If now we translate, or rather transliterate, *Dahanâ* into Greek, Daphne stands before us, and her whole history is intelligible. Daphne is 'young, and beautiful—Apollo loves her—she flies before him, and dies as he embraces her with his brilliant rays.' Or, as another poet of the *Veda* (x. 189), expresses it, 'The Dawn comes near to him—she expires as soon as he begins to breathe—the mighty one irradiates the sky.' Any one who has eyes to see and a heart to feel with nature like the poets of old, may still see Daphne and Apollo—the dawn rushing and trembling through the sky, and fading away at the sudden approach of the bright sun. The metamorphosis of Daphne into a laurel-tree is a continuation of the myth of peculiarly Greek growth. Daphne, in Greek, meant no longer the dawn, but it had become the name of the laurel. Hence the tree Daphne was considered sacred to the lover of Daphne, the dawn, and Daphne herself was fabled to have been changed into a tree when praying to her mother to protect her from the violence of Apollo.

Without the help of the *Veda,* the name of Daphne and the legend attached to her, would have remained unintelligible, for the later Sanskrit supplies no key to this name. This shows the value of the *Veda* for the purpose of comparative mythology, a science which, without the *Veda,* would have remained mere guesswork, without fixed principles and without a safe basis.

In order to show in how many different ways the same idea may be expressed mythologically, I have confined myself to the names of the Dawn. The dawn is really one of the richest sources of Aryan mythology; and another class of legends, embodying the strife between winter and summer, the return of spring, the revival of nature, is in most languages but a reflection and am-

plification of the more ancient stories telling of the strife between night and day, the return of the morn, and the revival of the whole world. The stories, again, of solar heroes fighting through a thunderstorm against the powers of darkness, are borrowed from the same source; and the cows, so frequently alluded to in the *Veda,* as carried off by Vritra and brought back by Indra, are in reality the same bright cows which the Dawn drives out every morning to their pasture-ground—the clouds—which, from their heavy udders, send down refreshing and fertilising rain or dew upon the parched earth. There is no sight in nature more elevating than the dawn even to us, whom philosophy has taught that 'nil admirari' is the highest wisdom. Yet in ancient times the power of admiring was the greatest blessing bestowed on mankind; and when could man have admired more intensely, when could his heart have been more gladdened and overpowered with joy than at the approach of

> 'the Lord of light,
> Of life, of love, and gladness!'

The darkness of night fills the human heart with despondency and awe, and a feeling of fear and anguish sets every nerve trembling. There is man like a forlorn child fixing his eye with breathless anxiety upon the East, the womb of day, where the light of the world has flamed up so many times before. As the father waits the birth of his child, so the poet watches the dark heaving night who is to bring forth her bright son, the sun of the day. The doors of heaven seem slowly to open, and what are called the bright flocks of the Dawn step out of the dark stable, returning to their wonted pastures. Who has not seen the gradual advance of this radiant procession—the heaven like a distant sea tossing its golden waves—when the first rays shoot forth like brilliant horses racing round the whole course of the horizon—when the clouds begin to colour up, each shedding her own radiance over her more distant sisters! Not only the East, but the West, and the South, and the North, the whole temple of heaven is illuminated, and the pious worshipper lights in response his own small light on the altar of the hearth, and stammers words which express but faintly the joy that is in nature and in the human heart—

> 'Rise! our life, our spirit is come back! the darkness is gone, the light approaches!'

If the people of antiquity called these eternal lights of heaven their gods, their bright ones (deva), the Dawn was the first-born among all the gods—Protogeneia—dearest to man, and always young and fresh. But if not raised to an immortal state, if only admired as a kind being, awakening every morning the children of man, her life would seem to be short. She soon fades away, and dies when the fountain-head of light rises in naked splendour, and sends his first swift glance through the vault of heaven. We cannot realise that sentiment with which the eye of antiquity dwelt on these sights of nature. To us all is law, order, necessity. We calculate the refractory power of the atmosphere, we measure the possible length of the dawn in every climate, and the rising of the sun is to us no greater surprise than that two and two make four. But if we could believe again, that there was in the sun a being like our own, that in the dawn there was a soul open to human sympathy—if we could bring ourselves to look for a moment upon these powers as personal, free, and adorable, how different would be our feelings at the blush of day! That Titanic assurance with which we say, the sun *must* rise, was unknown to the early worshippers of nature, or if they also began to feel the regu-

larity with which the sun and the other stars perform their daily labour, they still thought of free beings kept in temporary servitude, chained for a time, and bound to obey a higher will, but sure to rise, like Herakles, to a higher glory at the end of their labours. It seems to us childish when we read in the *Veda* such expressions as, 'Will the Sun rise?' 'Will our old friend, the Dawn, come back again?' 'Will the powers of darkness be conquered by the God of Light?' And when the Sun rose, they wondered how, but just born, he was so mighty, and strangled, as it were, in his cradle, the serpents of the night. They asked how he could walk along the sky? why there was no dust on his road? why he did not fall backward? But at last they greeted him like a poet of our own time—

'Hail, orient Conqueror of gloomy Night!'

and the human eye felt that it could not bear the brilliant majesty of Him whom they call 'the Life, the breath, the brilliant Lord and Father.'

Thus sunrise was the revelation of nature, awakening in the human mind that feeling of dependence, of helplessness, of hope, of joy and faith in higher powers, which is the source of all wisdom, the spring of all religion. But if sunrise inspired the first prayers, called forth the first sacrificial flames, sunset was the other time when, again, the whole frame of man would tremble. The shadows of night approach, the irresistible power of sleep grasps man in the midst of his pleasures, his friends depart, and in his loneliness his thoughts turn again to higher powers. When the day departs, the poet bewails the untimely death of his bright friend, nay, he sees in his short career the likeness of his own life. Perhaps, when he has fallen asleep, his sun may never rise again, and thus the place to which the setting sun withdraws in the far West rises before his mind as the abode where he himself would go after death, where 'his fathers went before him,' and where all the wise and the pious rejoice in a 'new life with Yama and Varuna.' Or he might look upon the sun, not as a short-lived hero, but as young, unchanging, and always the same, while generations after generations of mortal men were passing away. And hence, by the mere force of contrast, the first intimation of beings which do not wither and decay—of immortals, of immortality! Then the poet would implore the immortal sun to come again, to vouchsafe to the sleeper a new morning. The god of day would become the god of time, of life and death. Again, the evening twilight, the sister of the dawn, repeating, though with a more sombre light, the wonders of the morning, how many feelings must it have roused in the musing poets—how many poems must it have elicited in the living language of ancient times! Was it the dawn that came again to give a last embrace to him who had parted from her in the morning? Was she the immortal, the always returning goddess, and he the mortal, the daily dying sun? Or was she the mortal, bidding a last farewell to her immortal lover, burnt, as it were, on the same pile which would consume her, while he would rise to the seat of the gods?

Let us express these simple scenes in ancient language, and we shall find ourselves surrounded on every side by mythology full of contradictions and incongruities, the same being represented as mortal or immortal, as man or woman, as the poetical eye of man shifts its point of view, and gives its own colour to the mysterious play of nature. (pp. 116–126)

If Hegel calls the discovery of the common origin of Greek and Sanskrit the dis-

covery of a new world, the same may be said with regard to the common origin of Greek and Sanskrit mythology. The discovery is made, and the science of comparative mythology will soon rise to the same importance as comparative philology. I have here explained but a few myths, but they all belong to one small cycle, and many more names might have been added. I may refer those who take an interest in the geology of language to the *Journal of Comparative Philology,* published by my learned friend, Dr. Kuhn, at Berlin, who, in his periodical, has very properly admitted comparative mythology as an integral part of comparative philology, and who has himself discovered some striking parallelisms between the traditions of the *Veda* and the mythological names of the other Aryan nations. The very 'Hippokentaurs and the Chimera, the Gorgons and Pegasos, and other monstrous creatures,' have been set right; and though I do not hold Dr. Kuhn's views on many points, and particularly with regard to the elementary character of the gods, which he, like Lauer, the lamented author of the *System of Greek Mythology,* connects too exclusively with the fleeting phenomena of clouds, and storms, and thunder, while I believe their original conception to have been almost always solar, yet there is much to be learnt from both, even where we cannot agree with their conclusions. Much, no doubt, remains to be done, and even with the assistance of the *Veda,* the whole of Greek mythology will never be deciphered and translated. But can this be urged as an objection? There are many Greek words of which we cannot find a satisfactory etymology, even by the help of Sanskrit. Are we therefore to say that the whole Greek language has no etymological organisation? If we find a rational principle in the formation of but a small portion of Greek words, we are justified in inferring that the same principle which manifests itself in part governed the organic growth of the whole; and though we cannot explain the etymological origin of all words, we should never say that language had not etymological origin, or that etymology 'treats of a past which was never present.' That the later Greeks, such as Homer and Hesiod, ignored the λόγος of their μύθοι I fully admit, but they equally ignored the real origin (τὸ ἔτυμον) of their words. What applies to etymology, therefore, applies with equal force to mythology. It has been proved by comparative philology that there is nothing irregular in language, and what was formerly considered as irregular in declension and conjugation is now recognised as the most regular and primitive formation of grammar. The same, we hope, may be accomplished in mythology. . . . Mythology is only a dialect, an ancient form of language. Mythology, though chiefly concerned with nature, and here again mostly with those manifestations which bear the character of law, order, power, and wisdom impressed on them, was applicable to all things. Nothing is excluded from mythological expressions; neither morals nor philosophy, neither history nor religion, have escaped the spell of that ancient sibyl. (pp. 89–97, 139–140)