

I think one of the biggest similarities between the ancient Greeks and us modern people is that we are both curious about our origins as well as where we will end up. Also, it's not just about the beginning and end of individuals, but mankind as a whole. For differences, with modern technologies, we tend to explain things differently from the ancient Greeks.

The ancient Greeks were absolutely obsessed with lineage as it was demonstrated everywhere in the myths. Everyone can be traced to some origin. For example, in Library A2, Apollodorus writes "The Titans had offspring" and then uses paragraphs and paragraphs to explain the lineage relations of the gods in a "who and who had who" form [1]. Similarly, in Hesiod's Invocation to the Muses, the origins of several gods were also clearly stated, such as the origin of the muses: "They were born on Pieria after our Father Cronion Mingled with Memory" [2]. Moreover, similar to what we believe, that the offspring must share some similarities with their parents, the Greeks specified a "rule" that the union of monsters produced monsters, as observed by Buxton [3].

The Greeks also thought about death like we do. For gods, they believed that gods cannot die, only be imprisoned. Such is the case for Prometheus, the almighty titan imprisoned for stealing fire for humans [4]. It is also true for all those kids swallowed by Kronos. Even a titan cannot kill immortal beings. Instead, he had to imprison them in his stomach [5]. In my opinion, this particular setting is trying to answer the question of whether there are creatures that cannot die, which is related to death of humans. Perhaps a more straightforward notation is the death and rebirth of Dionysos in the Orphic theogony [6]. In this process, specific procedures needed to be taken to maximize the probability of a rebirth. The ancient Greeks demonstrated beliefs in the afterlife through this story, which is similar to contemporary beliefs of some religions, such as the concept of reincarnation in Buddhism.

It was not only individuals that the ancient Greeks reflected upon. They also contemplated on humankind as a whole, or even grander topics such as the origin of the universe. The entire collection of stories on cosmogony explains how the universe was created, and anthropogony explains where humans came from. For example, "In the beginning there was only Chaos, the Abyss," and after which Gaia, Tartaros, Eros began to form [7]. As for the origin of mankind, Apollodorus explained it as the outcome of Deucalion and Pyrrha throwing stones over their heads [4]. The ancient Greeks developed their own theory of how everything came into being, just like what we do nowadays with the Big Bang theory and the evolution theory.

However, different from us, the ancient Greeks did not have all these modern technologies that we use for scientific research. Instead of drawing these conclusions based on experiments, their thinking is more of a result of imagination and observation. This means that there are certain elements in Greek mythology that are not accepted by modern people like us. For example, in Hesiod's Theogony, consanguine marriage is a common theme. Ouranos married his own mother Gaia, and Zeus married his sister Hera [8]. This somehow reflects the fact that in ancient Greece, consanguine marriage was encouraged. However, with science, we now know that consanguineous marriage can result in children with cognitive difficulties, heart defects,

impaired hearing, and other genetically inherited diseases. It is usually not accepted by society.

In conclusion, there are similarities and differences between how the ancient Greeks and us perceive the world. These similarities and differences are demonstrated in their myths, as gods in the myths are basically reflections of human beings. It is thus interesting to learn their narrative, which gives us insight into how they think of the world.

#### References

- [1] Apollodorus, Library A2
- [2] Hesiod, Theogony 53-54
- [3] Buxton, The Complete World of Greek Mythology, pp. 47
- [4] Apollodorus, Library E1
- [5] Hesiod, Theogony 463-471
- [6] Buxton, The Complete World of Greek Mythology, pp. 52
- [7] Hesiod, Theogony 116-125
- [8] Hesiod, Theogony