

Vuthy Hastings

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Title:

Myths and Mythology, how stories shape the world.

The Genesis story 1:27 – 2:23 (Knox Translation) is the focus of this paper, there are countless stories just from the book itself let alone the myths that lay between the sheets of paper. The first story to acknowledge is what the book of Genesis is, defining the name Genesis is hoped to emit light on what the book may detail. Second, a comparative study between The Corpus Hermeticum and The Hebrew historical background, as there seems to lurk another story interlinking these two seemingly different schools of thought. A closer look into the creation myths on both sides and we find almost contrasting passages, the likelihood that one story shaped the other isn't too farfetched. Moving on it is time for the real fun, identifying how the creation myth itself has caused an effect on the world, I'm not here to declaim a myth or give truth to any. Nor am I going through each step to how the story from a psychoanalytical, linguistical, or metaphysical standpoint affects our perception, to tell you how perception and inference work would only confuse readers and myself. Taking a strictly comparative approach to identify moments where I see it true that there has been a story that's affected the world on whatever level, big or small, through commentaries on Genesis to versions of man's creations.

In the Hebrew Language, Bereshith is the equivalent in translation to the Greek word Genesis. The Greek version of the scriptures was called Septuagint, the name Genesis was 'adopted by the translators of the Septuagint' (Johnstone, 1884, p. 163). The Septuagint 'is often thought of as the Greek version or translation of the Hebrew Bible' (REEVES, 2018). For this purpose, the Hebrew definition for Bereshith is to be used instead of the Greek translation, this is simply a matter of Hermeneutics & origins. The Hebrew Bible is thought to be the first of its kind on sight, the date surrounding its appearance is not at all conspicuous, the Torah was translated first in the 'third century B.C.E' (Breed, 2024), with the rest translated further down the timeline. With the history of the Hebrew language, some have identified that 'written Hebrew did not represent vowels until the Middle Ages' (Breed, 2024), it was thanks to Jewish scribes known as Masoretes that started to codify the translations, 'adding vowels and accents to the ancient Hebrew consonants' (Breed, 2024). This took place around the 5th & 6th Century AD. With this, a contrast can now be used for speculation on dates to its appearance, however, as Gordon James puts it, 'what happened during the interval can only be conjectured' (James, 1927, p. 15). The interval in reference is of a time before its appearance in the 'Hebrew literary form' (James, 1927, p. 15). Gordon doesn't make any certifiable claim on the time elapsed but does deposit that it could've been over centuries ago. The period in-between 'may have passed from lip to lip as oral tradition' (James, 1927, p. 15). 'They may have been preserved by groups or cults such as "the schools of the prophets"' (James, 1927). It is to say that it could've been a completely different school of thought, problematic similarities can be found in the game of Chinese whispers, information when passed down orally tends to easily be misinterpreted, and this goes for both written and oral. As we can see the Hebrew bible is first on sight, therefore, we will use the Bereshith definition 'in the beginning' (Griffin, 2017). The short stories that then come out of Bereshith are said to be the beginnings of the cosmos, the universe in which we class as life and being.

Hermeticism and its origins is needed to move forward to bridge the gap between speculation and truth. Hermeticism 'is a set of philosophical and religious beliefs based primarily upon the writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus' (New World Encyclopedia, 2024). There is no one religion but the incorporation of many ideas such as Jewish & Christian mysticism along with Hellenistic philosophy and Egyptian Occultic beliefs. The movement can be 'traced back to Alexandria in the first centuries of the Common Era' (New World Encyclopedia, 2024). The ideologies that came with this creed were said to have influenced and compelled 'Muslim scholars in the early Middle Ages and European intellectuals' (New World Encyclopedia, 2024). Hermes Trismegistus also thought to be a

contemporary of Abraham may very well have then contributed to the Islamic & Judaism religions that came from the Abrahamic religion. The Corpus Hermeticum which is the foundational document of the Hermetic tradition was translated in the 15th century when remains of a single volume were found in Byzantine times. The original date is not certain but some believe it was written in 'Egypt sometime before the end of the third century C.E' (N/A, 1906, p. 1). This piece of text rose from 'the same religious and philosophical ferment that produced Neoplatonism, Christianity' (N/A, 1906, p. 1), these diverse accumulated collections of teachings are more or less lumped together with the label Gnosticism. A philosophical movement that can't exactly be traced but was thought to have 'roots in the impact of platonic thought' (N/A, 1906, p. 1). This has been brought to attention for several reasons; the ambiguity that surrounds the timeline of both The Hebrew Bible and The Corpus Hermeticum relays a sense of possible cohesion, secondly, throughout explaining briefly their history & timeline from the start to the end of the explanation several stories were imbedded, creating both what we believe to be their past whilst presently curating a story in the readers mind. This is one demonstration of the power of how stories shape the world.

On the creation of man, Gordon James starts by stating that the origin of man is a biological, scientific matter, not a religious one. 'What has the origin of man to do with religion at all?' (James, 1927, p. 85), 'That is a matter not for dogmatic assertion but for biological research' (James, 1927, p. 85). Further on Gordon announces that the Genesis main idea concerning man is not to distribute how the physical body was made but to demonstrate that man has relations to God. These fundamental aspects are; 'that he is the offspring of a good God' (James, 1927, p. 86) and 'that human life is sacred, not because it is human, but because it is divine' (James, 1927, p. 86). Last but not least in either the Babylonian or the Christian creation account both assert that man is the child of God. Retracing our steps to Gordon's earlier statement attributing the physical understanding to science, automatically when thinking about how stories shape the world, evolution vs creationism comes into play. The idea of evolution has made a home amongst the multitudes of human beings for decades and decades now, solidifying the belief in it day by day with the aid of science. As for the aim of Genesis, there is no total disagreement that the three main ideas are presented in the creation story but a total dismissal that it could also be referring to the physical body is ludicrous.

'God made man in his own image, made him in the image of God' (The Holy Bible, 1961, p. Genesis 1:27) This passage is closely linked with The Corpus Hermeticums view on man's coming of age, both state that man was created in the image of God but the Corpus Hermeticum takes it one step further;

‘And nature took the object of her love and wound herself completely around him, and they were intermingled, for they were lovers’ (N/A, 1906, p. Poemandres 14 pg 8). Hinting that nature is what created man’s body hence why man is twofold ‘mortal because of body, but because of the essential man immortal’ (N/A, 1906, p. Poemandres 15 pg8). It can be seen in the Hebrew bible that nature also made man’s body ‘ and now, from the clay of the ground, the lord god formed man’ (The Holy Bible, 1961, pp. Genesis 2: 7-8). The clay in my opinion is referring to nature and the 4 elements that encompass nature. According to Franz Bardon, ‘everything that has been created came into being through the effects of the elements’ (Bardon, 1999, p. 22). This can be noticed at the beginning of the bible when God said ‘Let there be light’ (The Holy Bible, 1961, pp. Genesis 1: 3-4). Light has fire as its foundation, and that much is obvious, if both treaties were analysed in congruency with one another an idea of humankind’s physical body may not be so obscured. Who’s to say that then we weren’t created in this form from the beginning of time? One story can grow as long and tall as Donald Trump’s border wall making an almost impossible barrier, just as the ideology of evolution has done so.

‘This rib, which he had taken out of Adam the Lord God formed into a woman’ (The Holy Bible, 1961, pp. Genesis 2:21-23). The rib is part of yet separate and differing in form both linguistically and physically. The notion that we are all one hasn’t been at the forethought of a lot of our history, separation in roles was pertinent back in times of war, women stayed home with kids and men went to fight. Countries still to this day view women as inferior beings to men, restricting their rights to study, freedom of choice, mobility, and so on. Because one came from the other, there in this quote lies a beginning to humankind, that beginning being a man and then a woman. The Corpus Hermeticum refers to both male and female but not to there being an order in which gender was created first.

“The bond that bound them all was loosened by God’s will. For all the animals being male-female, at the same time with man were loosed apart; some became partly male, some in like fashion [partly] female” (N/A, 1906, p. Poemandres 18 pg 9)

All animals and humans alike were loosened and dropped at the same time, all became male or female, none before the other. No nonsensical belief of better or special can be annexed to either creation of man and woman, the Hermetics make claim to us being both male and female which we know through science ‘all embryos, male and female, start life by developing a combined clitoral-penile tubercle’ (Sherfey, 2008). I can’t say with certainty that if this passage was more well-known in

the Bible, all of these conceptions of men and women would've never come into existence, it just comes to show the power of stories again.

The book of Genesis and the stories that come from the title alone were first presented as promised, the story of Genesis's adoption was an impact of how stories shape the world, in this sense the world being the Septuagint's world, as they were the ones that changed it from the Hebrew word Bereshith. Historical background on both the Corpus Hermeticum and the Hebrew Bible is shown in the second half demonstrating their overlapping stories, a bit of light was shed on their vagueness in the form of history, which in itself can be heard and seen as a story as it shapes our beliefs on when these treaties appeared, where they came from in terms of philosophical beliefs, if that have any weight to them and so on, constantly impacting the previous stories one may have had. The mention of Gnosticism gives leeway to the idea posited in the beginning that one or the other may have had intertwined before the arrival of the Hebrew Bible in Hebrew written language. As one prods through the essay, a comparative approach can be witnessed within each paragraph, text, and commentary. A variety of different commentaries could have aided the validity of this essay a bit more, however with the word count I have restricted it to only a few.

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