"In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas corpora": A Comparison of Three Themes in Ovid and Ancient Near Eastern Mythology

Austen Aquino
aaquino@wellesley.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.wellesley.edu/thesiscollection

Recommended Citation
https://repository.wellesley.edu/thesiscollection/509
"IN NOVA FERT ANIMUS MUTATAS DICERE FORMAS CORPORÆ":
A COMPARISON OF THREE THEMES
IN OVID AND ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN MYTHOLOGY

Austen Aquino

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the
Prerequisite for Honors
in Comparative Literature
under the advisement of Edward Silver

April 2017

© 2017 Austen Aquino
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people that I need to thank without whom this beast of a thesis would merely be a pipe dream. First and foremost, I have to thank my parents for everything they've done to help me during my time at Wellesley, and for letting me run away to go to a school on the East Coast that they'd never heard of before. Mom and Dad, thank you for trusting me, believing in me, raising me so that I felt I had the ability to take on a project like this one, and not letting me come home after my first week here when I called you crying because I accidentally shrank all my clothes in the school dryers. Also, thanks Mom for sending me pictures of the dog almost everyday this year for emotional support.

I also need to thank the myriad of wonderful friends in my life for their undying support. Vickey, Willow, Emily, Maya, Zaynah, Bridget, Clara, Kaylie, Jeanette, Clarissa, Ryan, Lisa, Vianna, and Ethan — thank you all so much for making sure that I was eating, drinking water, and sleeping, for sending me encouraging Snapchats and animal videos at 3 AM, for leaving me notes on my thesis carrel, for staying late to have Domino's delivered to the library with me, and for listening to me complain over the course of my year-long self-indulgent pity-party. I appreciate each and every one of you for your support, and for relentlessly cheering me on!

I need to thank my uncle Michael and my aunt Linda for taking the time out of their busy lives to proof read my outrageously long thesis. I also want to thank my Latin 315 class for their incredible discussions about Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that sparked ideas about the material I'd been studying. I especially want to thank them for drawing my attention to Ovid's connection to Lucretius, and to the linguistic intricacies of Ovid's anthropogony section. I also need to thank all of the trees that gave their lives throughout this process in the name of printing.

I'm also very grateful to all of the professors and mentors who have taken the time and effort to give me such sound advice, both academic and general, throughout my time here at Wellesley. Thank you to Professor Starr for seeing potential in my Latin abilities from my first year, and for advising my Classical Civilizations major. And thank you so much to Ruth and Mariana over in Special Collections. You have both given me endless support, mentorship, confidence, encouragement, and friendship from the very beginning of my Wellesley career. I am forever grateful to you both for always seeing the best in me and always believing in my abilities.

Thank you so much to Professor Nolden, Professor Rosenwald, and Professor Young for agreeing to be on my committee, and for reading my work. I'm so appreciative for the time, effort, and thought that you're undertaking on my behalf. I would like to extend an extra thank you to Professor Young for her secondary advisement on my thesis work, and for advising my Comparative Literature major. You are an incredible teacher, an incredible scholar, and an incredible person, and I am so grateful to have had the chance to know you and work with you throughout my time at Wellesley.

Finally, of course I have to thank Professor Silver for the extraordinary effort he's put into working with me on this project. Thank you so much for all of your guidance, for reading every draft I've given you (no matter how rough or how extravagantly long), for pushing my abilities as a scholar, and for believing that I was capable of accomplishing this thesis even when I didn't. Also, thank you for the pep talks, for answering my frantic emails even on weekends or on late nights, and for bringing Hector to so many of our meetings. And, thank you for listening to my vague, casual thesis topic last spring with such enthusiasm and boundless support: without you, I truly and honestly wouldn't have been able to write this thesis.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION..........................................................................................................................4

CHAPTER 1: Hospitality...........................................................................................................21

CHAPTER 2: Flood......................................................................................................................47

CHAPTER 3: Creation.................................................................................................................103

CONCLUSION..........................................................................................................................166

WORKS CITED.........................................................................................................................170

WORKS REFERENCED............................................................................................................174
INTRODUCTION: SING, O MUSE!

The striking motivic parallels between Ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman literatures, particularly between their mythological literatures, have often been noted by scholars. In early scholarship the connections between the Hebrew Bible and Greek classics were recognized and accepted. The link between these two geographical and cultural areas was considered to be the Phoenicians, a theory that has had a resurgence in modern scholarship. Walter Burkert noted toward the end of the 18th century, however, that there was a general shift toward "an image of a pure, classical Greece in splendid isolation",¹ which is influenced by several external factors.

Initially the gap between Near Eastern and Grecian cultures began with the evolution of attitudes towards Greece.² Largely within the German scholarly community there was a rise of romantic nationalist ideology³ in the late 18th century. This period was also a time "when Jews were being granted full legal equality in Europe"⁴, a time when anti-Semitic sentiments were on the rise, and ultimately a time when scholars began to emphasize the chasm between Ancient Near Eastern (i.e. Semitic) literatures and that of Greece (i.e. the roots of Western civilization). With the discovery of the common linguistic root of so-called Indo-European languages,⁵ the divide between Greece as a part of Europe and the Ancient Near East as a Semitic "other" culture

² As the concept of classical Greece becomes more polytheistic and Hellenistic in the works of scholars such as Johann Joachim Winckelmann, the culture and literature of Greece becomes more distant from that of the Ancient Near East, and from the Hebrew Bible in particular.
³ Romantic nationalism was an ideology that emphasized the inherent separateness of each cultural-ethnic community. Under this ideology, ethnic communities had a strong tie to their own literature and culture, and each community and their respective culture organically developed internally. See: Burkert, *Orientalizing Revolution*, 2.
⁵ Ibid., 2.
was reinforced. These various factors worked in concert throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, as Burkert observes, "in order to establish the concept of classical-national Greek identity as a self-contained and self-sufficient model of civilization".\textsuperscript{6} It was not until the decipherment of Near Eastern cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphs, the discovery of pre-Classical Greek Mycenaean culture, the decipherment of Linear B, and the discovery of the Gilgamesh epic, that Near Eastern culture reemerged into the scholarly conversation.

This resurgence spawned anti-oriental reactions.\textsuperscript{7} In fact, during the German inter-war period of the 20th century, many scholars and archaeologists, such as Helmut Berve and Otto Neugebauer, continued to favor Hellenism rather than universalism in their studies. Rarely, at this time, did German scholars consider Near Eastern culture in conjunction with Greek culture.\textsuperscript{8} With the discovery of Hittite literature\textsuperscript{9} and its connection to Indo-European languages, the mid-20th century saw these texts set against similar literatures from Semitic Ugarit, and Greek literatures, as well as those fragments from Philon of Byblos that addressed Phoenician myths.

After over a hundred years of rejecting the connection between Ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman cultures, the perceived gap was closing in scholarly circles, while literary comparisons accompanied by numerous historical claims became more common. For example, Joseph Fontenrose, an early 20th century scholar with a diffusionist mindset,\textsuperscript{10} took up the discussion of the textual transmission of flood stories around the time that Greek and Near

\textsuperscript{6} Burkert, \textit{Orientalizing Revolution}, 2.
\textsuperscript{7} Some scholars, such as Julius Beloch, completely rejected the role of Phoenicians in Greece, and continued to elevate the uniqueness of Asia Minor.
\textsuperscript{8} Franz Dornseiff was a rare exception who examined the interaction of these two cultures, an endeavor that was supported by the discovery of Hittite mythological literatures.
\textsuperscript{9} Burkert, \textit{Orientalizing Revolution}, 4.
\textsuperscript{10} Diffusionism is the idea that "cultural traits naturally move from more to less developed cultures". Ultimately, this harmful mode of thinking assumes the existence of, and perpetuates the idea of, superior and inferior cultures. See: Carolina López-Ruiz, \textit{When the Gods were Born: Greek Cosmogonies and the Near East} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 1-2.
Eastern literatures began to be juxtaposed within scholarly discussion again. Though he outlined two separate transmission routes for local and universal flood myths, Fontenrose's diffusionist mindset maintained that flood myths overall have their roots in the Babylonian version, which "has its origin in the natural conditions of the lower valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers". This same Babylonian story was taken up by both Hebrew peoples, becoming Noah's story, and by the Greeks. Picking up on the popular pre-18th century model of contact, Fontenrose argues that the most famous Greek flood story, that of Deucalion, drew its structure from the Babylonian story, which "went from Mesopotamia to Syria, and thence to Greece with the Phoenicians".

The reason that the Babylonian flood story spread so easily, Fontenrose continued, was likely because it "attached itself to local conditions and traditions", which themselves arose probably because "there occurred in this region one or more earthquakes accompanied by tidal waves [...] which naturally impressed themselves upon the traditions and folklore of the region". Piggybacking on a popular earlier transmission model, Fontenrose expanded his diffusionist model and specified the textual transmission of both universal and local flood myths based on the geographic and climatic conditions of each point of transmission. Ultimately, though, Fontenrose acknowledged the connection between Near Eastern and Grecian flood stories, his discussion of motivic and narrative similarities was inseparable from their function as historical evidence within his transmission model. Fontenrose's model was highly specific and

---

12 Ibid., 111-112.
13 Ibid., 112.
14 Ibid., 111.
overwhelmingly one directional in the transmission of texts, which is now recognized as a diffusionist model.

Until recently, the diffusionist line of thinking was not all that uncommon, and can continue to be seen in the work that Burkert was doing at the tail end of the 20th century. Even though Fontenrose was writing decades earlier than Burkert, and was working on a more specific model of textual transmission, Burkert's broader discussion about the "orientalizing period" in ancient Greek history still had elements of harmful diffusionism. During this "orientalizing period", Burkert argued, there was a "movement of eastern craftsmen to the West" who not only brought with them "a few manual skills and fetishes along with new crafts and images", but also functioned as conduits for the Phoenician-Greek alphabet, and larger "oriental" religious and literary influence on Greek culture. Pointing to evidence for a general "oriental" influence on Greek art during the geometric and archaic periods, such as "the fact that Olympia is the most significant location for finds of eastern bronzes, richer in this respect than all the Middle Eastern sites", Burkert's argument relies on evidence of the spread of Assyrians to the Mediterranean and "the spread of trade in metal ores in the whole area".

From this position of generality, a leap is necessary to move from such a broad model of cultural contact to any sort of textual transmission model. Where Fontenrose is perhaps too narrow in his answer to the question of textual transmission, he at least provided some specificity and the reasoning behind it, which was lacking in Burkert's model. Though Burkert's model of broad cultural (rather than strictly textual) contact is more fluid and supported by material and

---

15 Burkert, Orientalizing Revolution, 6.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., 4.
19 Ibid., 6.
artistic evidence, any specific textual transmission is unknowable in this model. Since historical and material evidence serves as the basis for Burkert's contact model, any cross-cultural interactions beyond the general can only ever be inferred, but not definitively proven.

The scholarly back and forth between textually specific transmission models, such as Fontenrose's, and broader cultural contact models, such as Burkert's, continues into the present day. Recently, John Taylor drew upon earlier discussions of textual transmission from the works of Fontenrose and J. G. Frazer. More specifically, Taylor developed an idea that Fontenrose mentioned only briefly, namely that the original Babylonian flood story successfully spread to Greece because it was able to graft onto local traditions inspired by natural phenomena.

Fontenrose's combination of diffusionism and the conflation of independently arisen myths served as the basis for Taylor's argument. He argued that a community of Jewish immigrants in Asia Minor brought their story of Noah's flood with them, which became assimilated with, and subsequently influenced, local pre-existing Grecian flood stories. Similar to Fontenrose's methodology, Taylor's own model for textual transmission, though less rigidly narrow than Fontenrose's, was based on his observation that "a tradition of flood stories seems to have grown up around the rivers and lakes close to the Phrygian city of Apamea". These pre-existing Greek stories became conflated with Near Eastern flood stories when Jewish immigrants who heard these stories began "to identify a local hill as Mount Ararat where the ark [in Genesis 6-9] had

---

20 Taylor specifically cites Frazer's idea that the motivic similarities of stories might be explained either "by diffusion from a common original or by coincidental independent occurrence" (Taylor 110), a distinction between which "it is usually impossible to decide" (Taylor 110). See: John Taylor, "Virgil Between Two Worlds," in Classics and the Bible: Hospitality and Recognition (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2007), 110.


22 Taylor, "Virgil Between Two Worlds," 110.
come to rest”\(^23\) a story which they brought with them. In more concretely recognizing the possibility for coincidentally similar, but independent, myths, Taylor's argument began to push past Fontenrose's diffusionist ideology. Taylor's model of textual transmission had a more solid historical basis, and did not use comparative analysis purely as evidence for a historical claim. Still, his model was still dependent on local geographical and climatic elements, and thus did not fully evolve beyond Fontenrose's argument.

Recently, Carolina López-Ruiz has explicitly pushed back against diffusionism,\(^24\) while also arguing against Taylor for a more general mode of cultural contact. Drawing upon Burkert's discussions of the "orientalizing period"\(^25\) in Greek cultural history, López-Ruiz's model for "the drift of Near Eastern ideas and technologies into Greece"\(^26\) is cross-cultural in nature. This model of cultural contact is rooted in the intimate and everyday contact that all people experience. Focusing on the cultural exchange that results from the "complex matrix of human connections"\(^27\) López-Ruiz rejects "the rigid scholarly model of textual transmission".\(^28\) She looks at "mainly oral and intimate transmission of stories and beliefs",\(^29\) a rather basic level of Greco-Near Eastern cultural contact and exchange that took the form of economic interactions and "bilingualism and intermarriage".\(^30\) This builds upon Burkert's theories of migrant craftsmen's role in cross-cultural contact.\(^31\) Where Taylor proposed a model of transmission based upon the interactions within a certain community located in a specific geographical

\(^{23}\) Taylor, "Virgil Between Two Worlds," 110.
\(^{27}\) Ibid., 11.
\(^{28}\) Ibid., 5 (emphasis original).
\(^{29}\) Ibid., 5.
\(^{30}\) Ibid.
location, López-Ruiz crafts a more fluid model of broad cultural contact. Her theory that cultural sharing happens on a truly intimate level of mixed families, commercial enterprises, and other daily social interactions suggests a transcendence of rigid boundaries. This broadness and flexibility stem from the fact that her "model of cultural exchange cannot possibly be reflected directly in the literary sources", and therefore approaches literary transmission by means of "more precise historical parameters".

López-Ruiz's choice to look at literary comparison from a socio-economic historical perspective, an approach that allows her a wider expanse for discussing cultural contact, draws our attention to what's at stake in cross-cultural comparative work. This issue is worth exploring in greater methodological detail. López-Ruiz's self-proclaimed cross-cultural approach, which she seems to have chosen as a way to subvert the dangerous diffusionist model that she cautions against, draws upon the arguments of comparativist scholars such as Wendy Doniger. In her most methodologically focused work, Doniger explored the concept of, and argued for, a cross-cultural, rather than universal, treatment of literary comparison. Cautioning against the postmodernist and post-colonialist approach based on "the different", as well as the classical comparative approach based on "the same", Doniger called for a "double vision" in the field of comparative mythology that balanced these two extremes. The crux of Doniger's argument is to convey that, "difference can be alienating; likeness, even the likeness that confuses night and day, generates love". Doniger did admit that emphasizing "likeness" without any sort of

---

33 Ibid., 4.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., 29.
checks and balances could easily devolve into "in the dark, all cats are gray". In so doing she acknowledged the very real fears of many postmodernists and post-colonialists of comparative mythology's penchant for harmful, prejudiced, and reductive universalism. These concerns are completely founded, for example in the diffusionist model. The diffusionist model posits that primitive cultures act almost like a vacuum, with ideas, skills, etc., being naturally pulled from highly advanced cultures to those that are less so: this assumes and reinforces the idea of culturally superior and inferior societies. Thus, the instinct to move to the other extreme of cultural particularism and individualism does not seem unwarranted, although Doniger was right in observing that these tenets could hinder comparative work. Nevertheless, beyond this acknowledgement, Doniger did no more than offer an apology for comparative work.

She continued to counter the past reductive tendencies of comparativists to veer too far toward "likeness" in numerous ways. In her discussion about the reality of objective comparison, Doniger made a point, which Bruce Lincoln later affirmed, that we compare myths not in a binary, but rather in a triangle: in the act of comparison "we are always pivoting upon our own understanding", with the comparativist's own intellectual preconceptions forming the third vertex of the triangle. A self-awareness of the inevitable effect that the comparativist's own prior knowledge will have on the comparative project, however, is not the only way to prevent slipping into universalism. Doniger explicitly stated her preference for a cross-cultural approach, rather than universalism, which she explored through her titular metaphor of the "implied spider". Many different cultures often asked similar grand questions through their myths, based

---

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid., 36.
42 Ibid., 61.
on religion or life experience, but the shared themes that underlie myths, according to Doniger, did not stem from the universality of the myths themselves, but from the shared human experiences that inspired them. In Doniger's view there are experiences of shared humanity that are not bound by a single culture. This is where the idea of the "implied spider"\textsuperscript{43} arose. The spiders were "the shared humanity, the shared life experience",\textsuperscript{44} and this commonality (i.e. the spider) "supplies the web-building material, the raw material of narrative to countless human webmakers".\textsuperscript{45} While the basis for mythological similarities (and thus for comparative mythology) across different cultures stemmed from their basis in the somewhat abstract "shared human experience"\textsuperscript{46} (i.e., the "implied spider") in Doniger's methodology, López-Ruiz's cross-cultural methodology is based on a shared human experience more concrete than large-scale religious and existential questions.

Although López-Ruiz's historical approach allows her a wider expanse for discussing cultural contact, ultimately her literary comparative work is tightly entangled with historical claims, just as in Burkert, Taylor, and Fontenrose. Though all four of these scholars have approached cultural contact and textual transmission differently, they all share the commonality of their historical, rather than literary, studies. López-Ruiz does not engage with the literary texts closely. Instead, she and Burkert have focused on socially grounded scholarship largely reliant upon hypothetical models of cultural contact that are unknowable. Both her model of intimate, boundary-transcending multicultural existences that naturally foster cultural exchange, and Burkert's model of migrant craftsmen's role in the "orientalizing" of Greek culture, depend on an assumptive leap from the available data, as well as the assumed level and content of cultural

\textsuperscript{43} Doniger, \textit{The Implied Spider}, 61.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
contact and exchange. Burkert and López-Ruiz's mode of scholarship seems to be what Bruce Lincoln had in mind when he wrote about "generalization", which, as Lincoln stated, can only "remain intuitive, unreflective, and commonsensical, that is without basis, rigor, or merit".

While it might be unfair to deem Burkert and López-Ruiz's cultural contact models as "without basis, rigor, or merit", inseparably weaving such a model with literary comparison does warrant that description. This sort of scholarship cannot wholly and satisfactorily replace literary comparison that is separate from strong historical claims.

As Lincoln noted so aptly, "the attempt to show transmission of culture traits always advances [...] a tendentious ranking of the peoples involved", which is one of the reasons why the structuralist approach to mythological comparison is preferable. Jonathan Culler aptly distilled the essence of structuralist analysis as "relat[ing] the object or action to a system of conventions which give it its meaning and distinguish it from other phenomena with different meanings. Something is explained by the system of distinctions which give it its identity", an analytical method that has its roots in Saussurean linguistics. Two integral elements of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theory, which structuralists later adapted, were the concepts of langue and parole. Essentially, Saussure understood langue as the larger system composed of rule and conventions. On the other hand, parole was the manifestation of this system of rules and

---

48 Lincoln, "Theses on Comparison," 121.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., 123.
conventions — Saussure specifically singled out executive actions, like speech.\textsuperscript{53} Saussure's separation of these two terms, "between rule and behavior",\textsuperscript{54} is crucial when studying meaning, as Culler noted. With the idea of rules and behaviors separated, one can begin to identify what the rules of the system actually are, and, in doing so, what individual units are contained within that system. Structuralist analysis is not interested in "the properties of individual objects or actions", but rather in "the differences between them which the system employs and endows with significance".\textsuperscript{55} The ways in which the individual units comprise the system — the ways that the composition of the units either follows the rules and conventions, or deviates from them (i.e. the behavior, or parole of the units) — in those gaps between, and inversions of, conventions and behavior is where we discover meaning. What is most pertinent to structural analysis is "the notion of relational identity":\textsuperscript{56} the synchronic web of connections between individual units within a particular system, and the diachronic nexus of relations between both systems and units as compared to other systems.

These are the foundational linguistic concepts that structuralists repurposed as tools for studying non-linguistic systems, such as literature, anthropology, or mythology. Claude Lévi-Strauss was a formative figure of the structuralist movement, and wrote several treatises on the application of structural linguistics in the field of comparative mythology. Throughout his various works, Lévi-Strauss associated myths with parole in terms of a non-linguistic symbolic system. He believed that structural linguistics provided an excellent model for the analysis of mythology because "it would seem that in the course of a myth anything is likely to happen. There is no logic, no continuity", but at the same time, "this apparent arbitrariness is belied by

\textsuperscript{53} Saussure, \textit{Course in General Linguistics}, 15.
\textsuperscript{54} Culler, \textit{Structuralist Poetics}, 8.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
the astounding similarity between myths collected in widely different regions". Myth, in Lévi-Strauss' understanding, "is language [...] it is a part of human speech", and therefore lent itself to structural linguistics-based analysis. While Lévi-Strauss did state that myth "is made up of constituent units" similarly to language, he posited that the "true constituent units of a myth are not the isolated relations but bundles of such relations and it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce a meaning". Further, these bundled relations could be compared both synchronically and diachronically: in order to make these comparisons at the same time Lévi-Strauss used a table.

In "The Structural Study of Myth" Lévi-Strauss illustrates his comparative methodology by diagraming the Oedipus myth in tabular form.
Taking the smallest individual units, Lévi-Strauss created vertical columns of relations and horizontal rows of narrative chronological continuity. In simply telling the myth, Lévi-Strauss explained, "we would disregard the columns and read the rows from left to right and from top to bottom", which was the synchronic arrangement. If, however, "we want to understand the myth", to discern its meanings, then we ignored the synchronic arrangement and focused on the diachronic arrangement, or the vertical columns. These vertical columns were created by grouping together various relations that belonged to the same "bundle", as Lévi-Strauss termed

---

62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
it, with each "bundle", or column considered its own unit.\textsuperscript{64} These columnar bundles were what Lévi-Strauss would eventually term a "mytheme".\textsuperscript{65} Once these mythemes are isolated, we can begin to analyze what exactly is the nature of the relations within the mytheme, what it means, which can, in turn, lead to an analysis of the myth as a whole. This method allowed the reader to better see and understand the internal structure of relationships and meanings within a particular version of a myth, however, there are often several versions of a single myth. In addition to the dual-axis single myth comparative methodology that Lévi-Strauss demonstrated, he also advocated a triple-axis multiple myth set-up consisting of several two-dimensional charts stacked on top of each other.\textsuperscript{66} This architecture allowed the comparativist to see the relational structure within each individual iteration (by reading left to right and top to bottom) as well as to see the ways those structures were similar or different from other iterations (by reading front to back). By analyzing the make up of each mytheme not only in relation to the larger relational web of a single myth, but also in relation to the variations of that mytheme in other versions of the myth, the reader's understanding of one myth's meaning was deepened and widened \textit{through comparison} with another myth, and vice versa.

Lévi-Strauss chose to focus purely on the texts themselves in his study, breaking them down into their component parts and setting those units in comparison as a way to discover both structure and meaning. When Lévi-Strauss expanded his method to compare "two myths from different cultures and claims to derive their meaning from the relations between them",\textsuperscript{67} however, Culler believed that Lévi-Strauss' analysis became problematic because "there is no a

\textsuperscript{64} Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," 433.
\textsuperscript{65} Culler, \textit{Structuralist Poetics}, 42.
\textsuperscript{66} Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," 435.
\textsuperscript{67} Culler, \textit{Structuralist Poetics}, 47.
priori reason to think that the myths have anything to do with one another.\textsuperscript{68} Despite Culler's caution, a method like this can help to overcome the clear deficiencies of cross-cultural contact models. The latter historicist model sidelines close literary comparative work, instead turning literary comparison into historical artifacts to be used as evidence of broader cross-cultural contact and exchange. These contacts and exchanges are all hypothetical, however, and ultimately, unknowable. Yet, despite this fact, those scholars who adhere to this theory might disregard similar myths simply because there is no evidence that their respective cultures were too distant.

On the other hand, the structuralist method put forth by Lévi-Strauss allows the comparativist to examine the relational structures of myths that are similar even if they are from vastly disparate cultures. Despite the lack of an "a priori reason to think that the myths have anything to do with one another",\textsuperscript{69} whether that is due to geographical, temporal, or cultural distance, structural analysis allows the comparativist to focus on the texts themselves. By allowing this comparison to take place, our understanding of each individual myth is enriched, as we are able to see how different mythemes function in different variations on a myth.

My aim and method in this project is similar. While looking at several myths from ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean cultures, I noticed numerous motivic and thematic similarities that catalyzed a closer comparative study. More specifically, I chose to study the Mesopotamian \textit{Enuma Elish}, various episodes in the Biblical Book of Genesis, the Yahwistic "J" and Priestly "P" narratives in particular, in the ancient Sumerian \textit{Epic of Gilgamesh}, the Biblical Book of Judges, a series of Biblical Psalms, and Ovid's Augustan poem the \textit{Metamorphoses}. A wide cultural, geographical, and temporal gap lies between many of these texts — for example,

\textsuperscript{68} Culler, \textit{Structuralist Poetics}, 47.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
Ovid undoubtedly did not have direct access to Biblical texts while writing the *Metamorphoses*. Under the historicist cultural-contact model, this distance would prevent the comparison of these texts. Despite this distance, however, there are truly striking similarities, in terms of flood and creation narratives for example, between these ancient Near Eastern and Classical Roman texts. Therefore, I elected to follow the structuralist method of analysis.

I have selected three case studies (the three different mythical narrative types being hospitality narratives, flood narratives, and creation narratives) each of which I have broken down into its component parts, which I have termed narrative functions (but which Lévi-Strauss terms mythemes). In chapter one I will look specifically at thematic overlaps as they occur in the hospitality myths of the *Metamorphoses*, Genesis, and Judges. This first chapter will also briefly model my comparative method before expanding into the subsequent analytical chapters. In chapter two I will pivot focus and examine flood myth narratives as they appear in Genesis, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and the *Metamorphoses*. The final analytical chapter will analyze mythic creation narratives, particularly those in the *Enuma Elish*, the Biblical Psalms, the Book of Genesis, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The conclusion will follow and reflect on the preceding comparative analyses.

In each chapter I have employed a modified version of Lévi-Strauss' tabular method, as I want to compare multiple myths but am also constrained by the two-dimensionality of paper. Therefore, for each case study I have created a main table mapping out the ways that each version approaches the isolated narrative functions in vertical columns. Although I do not create bundles in the same way that Lévi-Strauss does, I have created a synchronic vertical axis, and a diachronic horizontal axis for these main tables: as you read from left to right, you can compare the ways that each version of a myth narrative employs each function, but if you read top to
bottom you can see how each function fits within the larger context of the whole myth. With this main table created, it is much easier to identify the convergences, divergences, absences, and inversions of each narrative function across a series of narrative versions, and then to pull out the most salient functions for a more focused analysis and comparison. Diagramming these myths in such a manner and studying the narrative functions in this way facilitates our understanding of the external influences impressed upon the shape of each myth's patterning, whether that be authorial, cultural, or otherwise. I therefore posit that a mythical narrative contains/is composed of certain narrative functions, but for each version of a myth narrative the unique meaning arises from the way in which different people employ different cultural elements to pattern these narrative functions.
CHAPTER 1: HOSPITALITY

INTRODUCTION

The societies of the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean often observed rigidly formed societal mores regarding hospitality. The relationship between a guest and host was an important, and sometimes sacred, bond. The salience of hospitality customs became a recurrent theme within the ancient literary traditions of the Near East and Augustan Rome. When looking at several hospitality myths from ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean cultures, I noted several motivic and thematic parallels, which prompted closer and more structured comparative analysis. The three particular episodes that I have chosen are Genesis 19, Judges 19, and the story of Philemon and Baucis in Liber VIII of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. All three of these stories adhere to the same broad structure in which the native townspeople do no offer hospitality to wandering strangers while a local outsider does offer hospitality, with the result that the hospitable and inhospitable each receive proportional consequences. Each story essentially follows the same loose structure, threaded together by the theme of hospitality. Through a tabular structuralist analysis, however, it becomes clear that each story deviates from the other in several key instances, which are coordinated around the interactions between the host, guest, and townspeople, the morality of the host, and the consequential transformations of certain parties.

---

Genesis 19

The earliest of the texts examined in this chapter, Genesis 19:1-29 tells the story of Lot during the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. In the previous chapter, Genesis 18, Yahweh had decided to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for their "outrage" and "their sin so grave" (Gen 18:20 JPS Jewish Study Bible second edition), and sends proxies into Sodom to confirm His proclamation. Abraham, however, whom Yahweh had "singled [...] out" (Gen 18:19) to "become a great and populous nation" (Gen 18:18), challenges Yahweh's decision to destroy the entire city and "sweep away the innocent along with the guilty" (Gen 18:23). Yahweh agrees not to destroy the cities "for the sake of the ten [innocent people] " (Gen 18:33) in answer to Abraham's concerns. Genesis 19 then opens with Yahweh's proxies entering Sodom seemingly in order to judge the moral worthiness of its inhabitants. They meet Lot, one of Abraham's relations, at the gates of Sodom, and Lot immediately offers the disguised angels hospitality for the night (Gen 19:2-3). Suddenly, however, "the townspeople, the men of Sodom" (Gen 19:4) gather outside Lot's house and demand that the foreign visitors be handed over. Lot attempts to thwart the townspeople's intentions, and instead offers his virgin daughters to the mob for them to "do to them as [the townspeople] please" (Gen 19:8), as long as the visitors who "have come under the shelter of [Lot's] roof" (Gen 19:8) are left unharmed. The crowd is not mollified, and ignore Lot's entreaties because he himself "came here [to Sodom] as an alien" (Gen 19:9). As they Lot move in to attack, the guests pull Lot into safety and "struck [the townspeople] with blinding light" (Gen 19:11), which is an interesting reversal of the usual host-guest relationship.

71 The proper name of god, "Yahweh", is translated as "the LORD" in the J portions of the JPS Jewish Study Bible, however I will be using the name Yahweh throughout my analysis when referring to a Yahwistic text or quotation.
With their divine nature revealed, the angelic guests warn Lot of the impending destruction of the city, urging him to leave at once with his family for their own safety (Gen. 19:12-13). Lot, however, delays to the point where the angels need to forcibly remove him from the city, instructing him and his family to "not look behind [them], nor stop anywhere in the Plain [...] lest [they] be swept away" (Gen 19:17). After Lot and his family begin to flee, "the LORD rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah sulfurous fire from the LORD out of heaven" (Gen 19:24), thus completely decimating the cities. For a reason that is gapped, "Lot's wife looked back" (Gen 19:26) and was instantly turned to salt, presumably for breaking the angels' command. The point of view then pivots back to Abraham who is observing the destruction that he had advocated against in the previous chapter. The story of Lot is set within the larger Patriarchal History, which can be found in Genesis 12-50. Lot is a relative of Abraham, the first of the patriarchs identified by Yahweh, and this episode is bookended by stories of Abraham's special relationship with Yahweh.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Function</th>
<th>Genesis 19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Guests</td>
<td>Disguised angels, proxies of Yahweh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Hospitality</td>
<td>Theoxeny⁷²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition of Locals?</td>
<td>Yes, aggressive (against guests and host)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality of Sacrifice</td>
<td>Immoral (offers daughters) -Prevented-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper Hospitality?</td>
<td>Yes (exceeds expectations as host, protects guests at all costs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality of Host</td>
<td>Lot is morally ambiguous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation</td>
<td>Lot's wife Pillar of salt <em>breaks divine command</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1**
Diagramming the Narrative Functions in Genesis 19

**Judges 19**

Another, later, Biblical episode of hospitality can be found in the story of the old Ephraimite and the Levite with his concubine. This episode, found in Judges 19, recounts the tale of a Levite whose concubine deserts him, returning to her father's house in Judah. When he goes to retrieve her, the Levite is offered exceptional hospitality by the concubine's father (Judg 19:5-8). As the Levite and his concubine return to his home in Ephraim, they stop in Gibeah for the night, but are ignored by the local townspeople (Judg 19:15). The only person to offer them hospitality is an old Ephraimite, an outsider in the town of Benjamins. While the Levite and

⁷² "Theoxeny" is a term that refers to a specific subset of hospitality myth, in which a mortal, usually unknowingly, offers hospitality to a divinity that is usually disguised, quite often as a mortal.
his party are in the home of the Ephraimite, the townsmen, described explicitly as "a depraved lot" (Judg 19:22) descended upon the house and demanded that the guest be handed over to them. This scene seems to be a direct parallel of Genesis 19:4. Just like Lot, the Ephraimite offers his own virgin daughter to the crowd, but he also offers them the Levite's concubine (Judg 19:24), who was a party of the guest party.

Where Lot and his daughters are saved by the disguised angels, the Levite saves himself by pushing his concubine into the crowd, where she is "known [sexually]" (hebr. yādāʾ)\(^{73}\) and "intensely" or "repeatedly" (hebr. hitʿallēh)\(^{74}\) all night (Judg 19:25). The disturbed aspects of the story only augment as the Levite carries his collapsed concubine home only to "cut her up limb by limb into twelve parts" (Judg 19:29) and send her to the tribes of Israel. There are numerous striking parallels between the Judges 19 and Genesis 19 episodes. In fact, scholars believe that the author of Judges 19 was aware of the Lot episode,\(^{75}\) and created a response episode that not only presupposed the reader's knowledge of Genesis 19, but also was dependent upon that knowledge for the full richness of this episode to be understood. Regardless of one author's knowledge and interaction with another, the striking similarities — motivic, thematic, and even grammatical — provoke a comparison of the underlying structures of these two texts.

---

\(^{73}\) For lexicographical information on yādāʾ, see page 32-33.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Function</th>
<th>Judges 19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Guests</td>
<td>Mortal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Hospitality</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition of Locals?</td>
<td>Yes, aggressive (against guests and host)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality of Sacrifice</td>
<td>Immoral (offers daughter and guest's concubine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper Hospitality?</td>
<td>No (offers another man's property/ a member of guest party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality of Host</td>
<td>Host and Guest are immoral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Transformation           | Concubine  
Disfigured bodily,  
Becomes political symbol  
*sacrifice*               |

Figure 2
Diagramming the Narrative Functions of Judges 19

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Liber VIII

One of the numerous episodes contained within Ovid's 8 CE Augustan epic poem, the *Metamorphoses*, the hospitality episode of Philemon and Baucis tells the story of a poor, humble elderly couple that unknowingly offers hospitality to the Olympian gods Jupiter and Mercury. Despite the fact that Philemon and Baucis are so "parva" ("poor", 8.630) so as to be both "dominos" ("masters", 8.635) and "famulos" ("slaves", 8.635) in their home, they took in the disguised travelers. Despite their poverty, Philemon and Baucis do their best to provide proper hospitality to their guests, going so far as to use pieces of their house, like "ramale aridus tectumi" ("dry twigs of the roof", 8.644) to build a fire. Their gracious generosity in offer

---

76 All text in Latin will come from Ovid, *Metamorphoses Books 6-10*, ed. and commentator William S. Anderson (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1978). All translations from Latin into English will be my own from this point forward.
hospitality to these strangers is, as the narrator points out, a display of extreme piety. So devout are Philemon and Baucis that when they notice "totiens haustum craterra repleri" ("as often as the mixing-bowl was drained it was filled again", 8.679), they are concerned enough to pray for "veniam dapibus nullisque paratibus" ("forgiveness for not having been prepared for the feast", 8.683), piously attempting to atone for their poverty-driven unpreparedness and to prove their hospitality. The selflessness of the couple is rewarded when their guests reveal "di [...] sumus" ("we are gods", 8.689), and they tell Philemon and Baucis "vobis immuibus huius / esse mali dabitur" ("to you immunity will be given from this evil", 8.690-691). The couple, therefore, will be spared from the destruction of the "vicinia [...] inipia" ("impious neighborhood", 8.689-690), every home within which refused the disguised gods hospitality. In addition to their immunity from the destruction, Philemon and Baucis' shabby home is transformed into a richly appointed temple, and they are granted a boon. The pious couple uses this boon to become priests of the temple, committing to a devout life in service of the gods who saved their lives.

The story of Philemon and Baucis is one of many embedded stories within the larger narrative framework of the whole poem. In this instance, in the home of the river Acheloüs Lelex tells the story of Philemon and Baucis to Theseus' companion Pirithoüs. Lelex does this because Pirithoüs, who was a man who "deorum / spretor erat" ("was a despiser of the gods", 8.612-613), had expressed doubt at a story involving the gods transforming the form of a mortal that had been told by Acheloüs, their host. Therefore, the Philemon and Baucis episode functions on various levels. On the one hand it is meant to prove that the gods are capable of such feats of transformation, refuting Pirithoüs' doubt in the gods' abilities. On the other hand, it seems didactic in nature, serving as an exemplum, an "example", for Pirithoüs of the consequences
enjoyed from the proper execution of hospitality, and suffered by those who scorn hospitality practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Function</th>
<th>Metamorphoses Liber VIII</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Guests</td>
<td>Disguised Gods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Hospitality</td>
<td>Theoxeny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition of Locals?</td>
<td>Yes, non-aggressive (against guests, but not hosts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality of Sacrifice</td>
<td>Harmless and Comical (offer to kill pet goose) -Prevented-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper Hospitality?</td>
<td>Yes (provide best possible care despite their own circumstances)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality of Host</td>
<td>Philemon and Baucis are moral and pius</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Transformation | Philemon and Baucis Trees  
*Reward for pietas* |

**Figure 3**
Diagramming the Narrative Functions of the *Metamorphoses*

**Examining Narrative Functions**

In the following table, I have combined the component narrative functions that I had isolated and identified in each of the hospitality episodes here examined. What I call I a narrative function, Lévi-Strauss termed a mytheme, a word that he derived from the linguistic term "phoneme" as an analogy to Saussure's structural linguistic methods from which Lévi-Strauss developed his own structuralist literary analysis and comparative mythology. In this instance, a narrative function is a fundamental component part compromising a specific mythic episode,
which is the theme of hospitality here. For each of the identified functions, I have briefly described the nature of its appearance within its respective text. This tabular presentation allows for simultaneous synchronic and diachronic examination of the narrative functions and textual structures of each episode. By reading vertically, the progression and role of narrative functions within one story may be observed, while reading horizontally allows for the comparison of a specific narrative function across several iterations of the myth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Function</th>
<th>Judges 19</th>
<th>Genesis 19</th>
<th>Metamorphoses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Guests</td>
<td>Mortal</td>
<td>Disguised angels, proxies of Yahweh</td>
<td>Disguised Gods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Hospitality</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Theoxeny</td>
<td>Theoxeny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition of Locals?</td>
<td>Yes, aggressive (against guests and host)</td>
<td>Yes, aggressive (against guests and host)</td>
<td>Yes, non-aggressive (against guests, but not hosts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality of Sacrifice</td>
<td>Immoral (offers daughter and guest's concubine) -Fulfilled-</td>
<td>Immoral (offers daughters) -Prevented-</td>
<td>Harmless and Comical (offer to kill pet goose) -Prevented-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper Hospitality?</td>
<td>No (offers another man's property/ a member of guest party)</td>
<td>Yes (exceeds expectations as host, protects guests at all costs)</td>
<td>Yes (provide best possible care despite their own circumstances)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality of Host</td>
<td>Host and Guest are immoral</td>
<td>Lot is morally ambiguous</td>
<td>Philemon and Baucis are moral and pius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation</td>
<td>Concubine Disfigured bodily, Becomes political symbol <em>sacrifice</em></td>
<td>Lot's wife Pillar of salt <em>breaks divine command</em></td>
<td>Philemon and Baucis Trees <em>Reward for pietas</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4**
Mapping Narrative Functions in Hospitality Episodes

Despite the vast span of time, place, and culture separating the 8 CE Ovidian text from the Iron Age Biblical ones, by using this breakdown and visualization these texts can be
compared as easily as the Judges 19 and Genesis 19 episodes that are likely directly connected. This highly abstracted schema allows the comparativist to examine the texts at a structural, thematic, and motivic level. It is evident from Figure 4 that the hosts offer a meaningful sacrifice in each episode examined in this chapter. The substance and the morality of the sacrifice, however, vary widely between these texts, as do the fulfillment and outcome of these sacrifices. In the Biblical texts the sacrifices seem directly connected to the opposition of the locals, though in all three texts the sacrifices appear to play into the morality of the offered hospitality and of the hosts themselves. The specific ways that each author manipulates, maintains, inverts, or negates these various functions is not arbitrary, however, but fits within a larger pattern of morality. Genesis 19 presents a good host who make questionable moral choices, and yet is rewarded for it: this moral ambiguity is removed in Judges 19 and the Metamorphoses, the former being consistently immoral with a negative outcome, and the latter being consistently pius with a positive outcome. In each case, the narrative functions are manipulated and arranged to coordinate the morality of each host and their actions with a proportional outcome.

**Narrative Functions: Opposition of the Locals and the Morality of the Sacrifice**

In all three of the examined episodes, as evidenced in Figure 4, there is some manner of opposition, directed either towards the guests, the hosts, or both, from the local inhabitants. The rise of this opposition is often entangled with the outsider status applicable to all three host parties, and, in some instances, directly results in a meaningful sacrifice. The story of Philemon and Baucis, in Liber VIII of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, contains a passive type of local opposition, directed only at the guests, not at the hosts. Jupiter and Mercury disguise themselves with "*specie mortali*" ("a mortal appearance", 8.626) and, "*locum requiemque petentes*" ("desiring a place to
rest", 8.628), they approach "mille domos" ("a thousand houses, 8.628). Those "mille domos", however, all have "clausere serae" ("door bars locked up", 8.629). There is no violent confrontation between the disguised gods and the locals, in fact, there is not even any face-to-face contact between them. The only opposition that Jupiter and Mercury face in this episode is the physical barrier of doors and silence.

This rather passive local opposition functions mainly as a backdrop against which the inscrutable piety of Philemon and Baucis, the owners of the "una [domus] recepit" ("one [home that] took them in", 8.629), stands out. In contrast to the cold inhospitality of the "mille domos" (8.628), Philemon and Baucis offer warm and generous hospitality in their "parva" ("poor, 8.630) home. Ovid spends 49 lines emphasizing the humble poverty of Philemon and Baucis' home, constructing a vivid image of the couple's meager and unadorned way of life. This sets the stage for the utter selfless generosity and piety of their hospitality. The couple not only layout their best possessions, which were "vilisque vetusque" ("cheap and ancient", 8.658) by normal standards of decorum, but they go so far as to take "ramale aridus tectum" ("dry twigs off the roof", 8.644) in order to build a fire for their guests. In an attempt to meet their duties as hosts, Philemon and Baucis are willing to sacrifice everything they have, including their home itself. They even "mactare parabant" ("prepare to sacrifice", 8.685) their "unicus anser [...] minimae custodia villae" ("only goose [...] the guard of the house", 8.685), another valuable asset that they are willing to give up in the name of hospitality. Meanwhile the opposition of the locals through silence and inhospitality, a manifestation of their impiety, serves to further emphasize the pure generosity and selfless piety of Philemon and Baucis' actions and sacrifices. While the inhospitality of the locals does cause Jupiter and Mercury to decide that "meritasque luet vicinia poenas / inpia" ("the impious neighborhood will suffer deserved penalties", 8.689-690), this feels
more like an sudden, in the moment decision, an afterthought rather than a key moment in the trajectory of the episode. The purpose is, again, to set apart the exceptionally hospitable and pious Philemon and Baucis to whom "immunibus huius / esse mali dabitur" ("immunity will be given from this evil", 8.690-691).

While the opposition of the locals is a passive and minor element of Ovid's hospitality episode, functioning to emphasize Philemon and Baucis' exceptional hospitality and piety via contrast, the opposition of the locals in Genesis 19 provides a very real and vivid threat to both the host and guests. Just as Philemon and Baucis take in Olympian gods disguised with "specie mortali" ("a mortal appearance", 8.626), so too does Lot hospitably offer "two angels" (Gen 19:1), who are disguised as men, their "servant's house to spend the night, and bathe [their] feet" (Gen 19:2). Where the Metamorphoses creates local opposition through a lack of confrontation, Genesis 19 sees the local townspeople "the men of Sodom [...] gathered about the house" (Gen 19:4) like a mob, which instantly implies trouble and creates a sense of unease in the reader about what will happen next. Already, the local opposition in Genesis 19 has taken on a more vivid and tense tone than that of the Metamorphoses. The crowd then "shouted to Lot" (Gen 19:5), and it becomes evident that the locals are not just opposing the guests, as happens in Ovid, but are also challenging Lot's own hospitality and role as host.

The crowd then demands that Lot "bring [his guests] out to [the crowd], that [the crowd] may be intimate with [the guests]" (Gen 19:5). The key term to understanding the true nature of this threat is "to know" (Gen 19:5), a translation of the Hebrew term יָדָּא, which can mean to

---

Later in the episode, Lot refers to his angelic guests as "men" (Gen 19:8). Also Jonathan Safren notes that while Lot does pays respect to the strangers, it is not an unreasonable amount, indicating that he is unaware of their true divine nature. See: Jonathan D. Safren, "Hospitality Compared: Abraham and Lot as Hosts," in Universalism and Particularism at Sodom and Gomorrah: Essays in Memory of Ron Pirson, ed. Diana Lipton (Williston: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 167.
understand something or to know someone personally, but can also function as a euphemism for knowing someone sexually.\textsuperscript{78} The euphemistic meaning is generally accepted in this instance.\textsuperscript{79} Whether the men of Sodom are fueled by homosexual lust, or are attempting to exert their power over Lot and his guests,\textsuperscript{80} this is an aggressive and invasive demand. Moreover, it is a demand that "amounts to the revocation of, and insult to, [Lot's] authority [...] it brings shame and dishonor",\textsuperscript{81} a challenge which tests Lot's own integrity and morality as a host and as a person. The crowd's violent demand upon Lot and his guests is meant to test Lot, to provide him with a situation to which he will have to react, rather than to serve as a contrasting set piece as in the Philemon and Baucis story. Lot's reaction in this moment is key to understanding, not only his character, but also the role of this episode in the larger Patriarchal History.

As Figure 4 illustrates, quite strikingly, there is an almost identical scene in Judges 19 that functions quite similarly to the one in Genesis 19. Unlike the \textit{Metamorphoses} and Genesis 19, however, the hospitality in Judges 19 is not a theoxenic episode, meaning that hospitality is not offered to divine beings, but rather to another mortal, which complicates the parallel with Genesis 19. There are several other elements that are parallel, but are simultaneously inversions

\textsuperscript{79} Scott Morschauser is one scholar who does not agree with this meaning at all. He argues for a purely juridical reading of this episode. In his view, Lot is not offering hospitality, but supervising strangers, who are potential threats to the city, ensuring they do not cause any trouble until they have left the city limits (469). The "men of Sodom" (Gen 19:4), therefore, are a "purposeful delegation" (467) with civic authority, who use \textit{yādā} in a purely intellectual sense. He argues that this term is "of treaty/covenant terminology in the Near East, referring to 'formal acknowledgement/recognition' of an individual's identity or status" (472), and is thus here used "to investigate (a person's state or actions)" (472) and determine if they are trusted and worthy of hospitality. See: Scott Morschauser, "'Hospitality', Hostiles and Hostages: On the Legal Background to Genesis 19.1-9," \textit{Journal for the Study of the Old Testament} 27, no. 4 (2003): 467-472.
\textsuperscript{81} Morschauser, "'Hospitality', Hostiles and Hostages," 473.
of, scenes from Genesis 19. After the Levite and his concubine arrived in Gibeah and waited "in the town square" (Judg 19:15), they are eventually taken in an old Ephraimite (Judg 19:20) who offers them hospitality. In a scene highly reminiscent of Genesis 19, "the men of the town" (Judg 19:22) surround the old Ephraimite's home. From the outset, the narrator describes these men as "a depraved lot" (Judg 19:22), implying that the coming confrontation will be violent and negative. Judges 19 continues to follow the narrative arc of the Lot episode as the Benjaminite townsmen demand that the old Ephraimite "bring out the man who has come into [his] house, so that [they] can be intimate with him" (Judg 19:22, emphasis added). The Benjaminite mob here uses the same term, yāḏā’, that the men of Sodom use in Genesis 19 with the same euphemistic allusion to sexual violence. Moreover, the reaction to this demand will, again, define not only the characters within the story, but also this episode's relationship to Genesis 19.

Where the Genesis 19 and Judges 19 episodes diverge from each other is in the characters' reactions to the violent challenge put forth by the locals. After putting himself in a vulnerable position by bravely stepping before the threatening mob, Lot entreats the crowd to "not commit such a wrong" (Gen 19:7), referring to their demand to sexually assault Lot's guests. He takes his duties as a host very seriously, trying to protect his guests in every way that he can. Throughout the narrative up to this point the narrator has continuously characterized Lot as exceptionally hospitable, insisting that the travelers stay with him for the night (Gen 19:2), providing them a feast that he had not initially offered (Gen 19:3), and now, alone, defending his guests from an increasingly volatile crowd, building up an expectation within the reader's mind about Lot's character. This expectation is complicated, however, when Lot, in an attempt to appease the crowd's demand, offers up his "two daughters who have not known a man" (Gen
stipulating that the crowd "may do to them as [they] please" (Gen 19:8) as long as they "do not do anything to these men, since they have come under the shelter of [his] roof" (Gen 19:8). Just as Philemon and Baucis were willing to sacrifice anything and everything they had, so too is Lot willing to go above and beyond in order to fulfill his duty as a host. Indeed, many scholars operate under the premise that, in the ancient world, "hospitality is sacred", and that the host-guest relationship was sacrosanct and unbreakable — a line of thought that would justify Lot's offer as necessary, albeit unfortunate.

Robert Alter believes that Lot's offer is "too patly explained as the reflex of an ancient Near Eastern code" and that his two virgin daughters are intended to incite "the lust of the would-be rapists". In his comment, Alter alludes to the shock that the reader surely experienced upon finding out the lengths to which Lot was willing to go in order to protect his guests and be a good host, a shock that's augmented by the previous characterization of Lot as a generous and noble person. In this moment, when Lot willingly chooses to protect his guests and, in turn, to sacrifice the dignity and safety of his daughters, the ambiguity of Lot's character and morality is revealed. Although he appears to be an excellent host, willing to go to astronomical lengths to keep his guests safe, he becomes a man, a person, of questionable character. The crowd's

---

82 Here, again, the term "known" is a translation of yādā, which was used earlier in the narrative, and which implies that his daughters are virgins, and therefore quite valuable marriageable assets. See page 32-33 for lexicographical information.
84 Robert Alter, Genesis (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 85.
85 Once again, Morschauser attempts to explain this moment in juridical, and sanitized, terms, stating that "Lot's actions are neither an expression of patriarchal privilege, nor justification for its abuse, but are to be considered within the practice of "hostage-exchange" (474), and that his daughters, who are "exceedingly valuable" (474), are offered up "to be held — in safekeeping" (475, emphasis original) until the strangers leave the city without incident. Under Morschauser's reading, Lot's shocking offer is sugarcoated and diluted to seem like an ordinary occurrence in ancient legal practice: it is a reading that strips the narrative of its gravest conflict. See: Morschauser, "Hospitality', Hostiles and Hostages", 474-475.
confrontation is meant to force Lot into a near impossible situation, through his reaction to which the author reveals Lot's true weakness and ambiguity. This ambiguity carries throughout the rest of the episode as Lot's weak and ambiguous character becomes more apparent, and yet he is saved from the destruction of Sodom despite this, leaving the reader to ask: why?

Although Judges 19 closely parallels, and even replicates, numerous functions and motifs that occur in Genesis 19, Judges 19 also inverts several aspects of Genesis 19. From the first encounter between the Levite and the old Ephraimite, the hospitality is set up as off-kilter and full of blunders. Upon meeting the Levite, the old Ephraimite asks where he is going, which is "clearly not proper protocol". The Levite responds with a frustrated statement of "self-sufficiency", listing off his provisions and definitively stating, "we lack nothing" (Judge 19:19), which "in and of itself violates the spirit and law of hospitality". Unlike Lot and the angels, the old Ephraimite and the Levite are constructed as an inept host and bad guest. So when the "depraved lot" (Judg 19:22) of townsme make their demand, and the Ephraimite faces the Benjaminites as Lot faced the men of Sodom, the Ephraimite's offer of his "virgin daughter" (Judg 19:24), which mirror's Lot's offer, as a means to protect his guest, could be an improvement upon his hosting duties, if morally uncomfortable.

It is the Ephraimite's additional of the Levite's "concubine" (Judg 19:24), who is technically one of his guests, or at least another man's property, where the Ephraimite solidifies his status as a negative and incompetent host. While Lot and his daughters are saved by their divine guests who are above moral reproach, the morality of this sacrifice is further complicated because, although the old Emphraimite is similarly saved by his guest, it is by a mortal guest.

87 Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility," 8.
who does so at the expense of his concubine, the sacrifice, rather than in addition to her. The Levite saves his host by "seiz[ing] his concubine and push[ing] her out to [the townspeople]" (Judg 19:25), condemning her for his host's and, primarily, for his own safety — a selfish and cowardly action. Already this is an unambiguously negative action. Considering the initial portrayal of the Levite as seemingly affectionate towards the concubine, however, setting out "to woo her" (Judg 19:3) and "to win her back" (Judg 19:3) when she inexplicably leaves him, his tactile, willing, and selfish sacrifice of her feels all the more abhorrent. Though this sacrificial episode is decidedly less ambiguous in nature than that in Genesis 19, both are disturbing, particularly when set against the pious, and even comical, sacrifice of their "unicus anser" ("only goose", 8.685), which itself paints a funny and charming picture of well-intentioned charity.

**Narrative Function: Nature of the Transformations**

In all three of the examined episodes, the sacrifices that the hosts (and guests) are willing to make for the sake of the guests (or for themselves) reveal their own moral integrity. As Figure 4 illustrates, all three episodes also contain a transformation, which is either directly connected or indirectly related to the morality of the host and guest, and of the sacrifices offered. In the *Metamorphoses*, for example, the selfless sacrifices made by Philemon and Baucis characterize them as generous hosts who are unfailingly dedicated to the responsibilities they owe to their guests. The reader is particularly impressed by their unrestrained generosity in offering hospitality due to the couple's obvious poverty. This behavior falls in line with the general pattern of theoxeny myths, in which "hospitable characters are moral and pious". Their humble poverty, and their eagerness to perform generous hospitality despite it, marks Philemon and

---

88 Louden, "Theoxeny," 32.
Baucis as "iuste senex" ("a just old man", 8.704) and "femina coniuge iusto / digna" ("a woman deserving a just spouse", 8.704-705), as a couple imbued with piety.

Piety, or pietas, is an important idea in the Roman conception of virtue, and therefore, in this episode, it is rewarded. Not only do Jupiter and Mercury grant Philemon and Baucis "inmunibus huius / esse mali" ("immunity [...] from this evil", 8.690-691), but they are also granted one request, allowed to "dicite [...] quid optetis" ("state what you may wish", 8.704-705) to the gods. Driven by the same piety that earned them this boon, the couple request "esse sacerdotes delubraque vestra tueri" ("to be priests and to watch over your temple", 8.707), which the gods transformed out of the couple's once shabby house (8.699-700), devoting their lives to the service and worship of the very gods who spared their lives. This request is granted, and when the couple was "annis aevoque soluti" ("released from old age", 8.712), simultaneously "frondere Philemona Baucis, / Baucida conspexit senior frondere Philemon" ("Baucis watched Philemon put forth leaves and old Philemon watched Baucis put forth leaves", 8.714-715), with both able "'vale [...] o coniunx' dixere simul" ("to say at the same time 'farewell [...] oh spouse'", 8.717-718) in a final display of loyal affection and familial piety toward each other. The couple is transformed from pious and hospitable paupers into pious priests, and then again from priests, quite amicably, into twin trees, living organisms that will continue to grow, remaining side by side forever.

This transformation is not a punishment, but a reward, and one that feels proportional to the actions and morals of Philemon and Baucis as it is a welcome end that provides them with comfort, closure, and the chance to say goodbye before settling into a peaceful end. This provides a sharp contrast for the transformations that occur in Genesis 19 and Judges 19, both of which feel disproportionate, if not completely unwarranted. While Lot has proven himself an
exceptional host by offering his daughters up for sexual abuse, he has simultaneously revealed an amoral ambiguity of character. Despite condoning the rape of his own daughters one moment, in the next his guests, divine beings who are agents of Yahweh, "stretched out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them" (Gen 19:10) They save his life only to announce, just a few verses later, that "the LORD [had] sent [them] to destroy" Sodom because "the outcry against [Sodom] before the LORD [had] become so great" (Gen 19:13). Not only is Lot saved from the immediate threat of the violent townspeople, but he is also dragged out of the city by the angels before its fiery destruction (Gen 19:16). Yahweh and his proxies go to great lengths to save Lot despite his "less than virtuous behavior", though the narrator claims that Lot is saved because of "the LORD's mercy on him" (Gen 19:16). Lot's weak and amoral character continue to drive his actions throughout the latter half of the episode, and the angels and Yahweh continue to grant him favors despite his behavior.

As Lot and his family flee, the angels state their command, "do not look behind you" and to "flee to the hills, lest you be swept away" (Gen 19:17). Lot immediately resists this divine command by claiming that he cannot flee to the hills "lest the disaster overtake [him]" and he dies (Gen 19:19). Meanwhile the destruction of Sodom is described and the narrator introduces a new character, Lot's wife, who is completely gapped, rising to the surface of the narrative only as she "looked back" (Gen 19:26) and "thereupon turned into a pillar of salt" (Gen 19:26). On the surface this seems like an extraneous detail to include in the narrative. Upon further consideration, though, this sentence raises several questions pertaining to Yahweh's selective mercy throughout the episode. Lot's wife could only have been "turned into a pillar of salt" (Gen 19:26) by Yahweh's power, undoubtedly as a punishment for looking back after the angels

---

89 Bolin, "The Role of Exchange," 55.
specifically commanded, "do not look behind you" (Gen 19:17). Whether Lot's wife looked back on purpose or on accident, being instantaneously transformed into salt seems like a disproportionately harsh punishment for the transgression at hand.

This is particularly apparent when Lot's explicit claim, that he could not "flee to the hills" lest he die (Gen 19:19) in the face of the angels' command to "flee to the hills" (Gen 19:17), is remembered. Not only was Lot not punished for his resistance, but his disobedience, driven by fear and lack of trust in divine intervention, was placated and even rewarded. This calls into question Yahweh's criteria for distributing mercy. If Yahweh has mercy on Lot because he "is a merciful god", then how can he have "annihilated" (Gen 19:25) the residents of Sodom and Gomorrah who demanded a moral transgression (sexual abuse) that Lot himself was willing to provide in the form of his own daughters? So why was Lot saved? This question comes down to the final verse of the episode, in which the reader is told, "God was mindful of Abraham and removed Lot from the midst of the upheaval" (Gen 19:29, emphasis added). Ultimately, Yahweh did not save Lot because Lot necessarily deserved to be saved — Yahweh saved Lot because Lot was related to Abraham whom God had "singled [...] out" (Gen 18:19). Yahweh has a special relationship with Abraham, who will "instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is just and right" (Gen 18:19), and who "is to become a great and populous nation" (Gen 18:18): he is the first patriarch of what will become Israel. This status and special relationship are the true cause of Lot's salvation in spite of his moral shortcomings. In fact, his moral ambiguity is meant to clash with the repeated and purposeful efforts to ensure his safety — the reader is meant to call into question the true drive behind Yahweh's actions.

The moral ambiguity that is key in Genesis 19 is removed when the story is reworked in Judges 19. The old Ephraimite is clearly an inept host, which is an inversion of Lot's exceptional

---

hospitality. This inversion of the Genesis 19 episode extends to where the point of view is focused: in Genesis 19, it rests with Lot, the host, but in Judges 19 it rests with the Levite, the guest, and it is his morality, his role in the transformation scene, that is crucial in this episode. In many ways, as outlined above, Judges 19 closely parallels, and even replicates, Genesis 19, purposefully inciting the reader to compare the two episodes. With the reader's mind primed to draw parallels and comparisons between these two episodes, Judges 19 sharply diverges from Genesis 19 through a series of inversions. Beginning with the ineptitude of the host, and continuing into the role of the Levite in completing the sacrifice, rather than preventing it as the angels do in Genesis 19, these pointed inversions of narrative functions as they appear in Genesis 19 culminate in the sacrifice of the Levite's concubine in return for the safety of the old Ephraimite host and the Levite himself.

As Lot's wife suffered an unjust and excessively harsh transformation, the Levite's concubine was "known [sexually]" (hebr. yāḏā’, Judg 19:25) and "repeatedly" (hebr. hit‘ālēl, Judg 19:25) continuously by the mob "all night long until morning" (Judg 19:25), suffering an unspeakable and dehumanizing horror, and bodily transformation through mutilation and violation. Despite his role in this abhorrent scene, the Levite appears unperturbed, waking up the next morning he "went out to continue his journey" (Judg 19:27) as though nothing was amiss, continuing to color him as a selfish and immoral character. This characterization is augmented by the Levite's cavalier treatment of his concubine when he finds her "collapsed at the entrance of the man's house where her husband [he himself] was" (Judg 19:26). Rather than express any concern, or any emotion at all, he commands her to "get up" (Judg 19:28) before placing her "on

---

91 This scene, primarily in Judges 19:25, is a direct inversion of the Genesis 19 episode, even down to the motion performed by the guest in order to save their host: where the angels "pulled" (Gen 19:10), the Levite "pushed" (Judg 19:25).
the donkey and set out for home" (Judg 19:28), treating her violated and unresponsive body like an object. The final transformation of this episode occurs when the Levite arrives home and unfeelingly "picked up a knife, and took hold of his concubine and cut her up limb by limb into twelve parts" (Judg 19:29), each of which is eventually used as a political symbol meant to rally the tribes of Israel. This is an extremely disturbing scene.

The reader's revulsion is only deepened when they realize that, although the concubine had "collapsed" (Judg 19:26) and gave "no reply" (Judg 19:28), she is never explicitly said to be dead before her husband "cut her up limb by limb into twelve parts" (Judg 19:29). This lack of clarity functions to destabilize the reader, which works in concert with the inversions and perversions in this episode to mirror the setting of the episode, which takes place "when there was no king in Israel" (Judg 19:1). Not only is there no king, but Yahweh is also conspicuously absent from this episode. As Stuart Lasine observes, the inversions employed in Judges 19, as well as the perversity of the concubine's final transformation, are used "to who how hospitality is turned upside down when one's guests are not angels, and one lives in an age governed by human selfishness".

92 This lack of clarity that leaves the reader feeling precarious is further emphasized through the term used to describe the concubine herself, PILEGEŠ. Though this is translated as concubine, it is a foreign loan word, likely from the Greek "παλλακίς", which could mean courtesan or concubine. The exact relationship between this man and woman is mostly unknown. On the one hand, the Levite traveled a great distance "to woo her and to win her back" (Judg 19:3), which seems to imply that he is affectionate towards her. On the other hand, however, the Levite willingly and violently hands this woman over to her rapists, knowing full well what he was doing, in order to save himself, treating her like property. So, while this dismemberment episode is disturbing either way, it is unclear whether it is partner abuse or the disposal of property. The use of this foreign term is meant to defamiliarize the reader and augment the lack of clarity about the woman's physical state at the time of dismemberment. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. and ed. M.E.J. Richardson (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2001), 929.

93 Lasine, "Guest and Host," 40.
CONCLUSION

Through the examination of various narrative functions and a comparison of how those narrative functions work within each respective episode, I have been able to better grasp how the authors are utilizing the building blocks of a hospitality myth to meet their own individual needs. Ovid, for example, specifically employs a common subset of hospitality stories, that of the theoxeny myth, in his rendering of the Philemon and Baucis episode. In every respect, Philemon and Baucis align with the typical patterning of theoxeny stories, in which "hospitable characters are moral and pious", a characterization for which the couple is richly rewarded. At every turn within the narrative Ovid has used a positive instantiation of each narrative function in order to establish the undeniable piety of Philemon and Baucis, as well as the unambiguously positive transformation that the receive as a reward for their pietas, or "piety". Ovid makes this story so clear-cut because it is told within the poem by another character as a sort of didactic exemplum, or "example", of both the gods' transformational abilities and of the proportional consequences incurred through hospitality practices. In addition to its immediate context, the Philemon and Baucis episode is crafted to fit within one of the larger themes of transformation within the Metamorphoses as a whole: the idea that a metamorphosis is not just proportional to one's character, but actually intensifies or reveals one's interiority. This theme is evident in another scene of hospitality in Liber I — the story of Lycaon (1.209-243). After having violated the mores of hospitality to a disguised Jupiter, Lycaon is turned into a wolf, undergoing "a transformation that seems at once to punish his attempt to take on the god's role in the story and

94 Louden, "Theoxeny," 32.
to express his own innate bestiality." In establishing Philemon and Baucis as undeniably pious, and then describing their transformation from paupers into priests, Ovid creates a metamorphosis that reflects and intensifies the couple's inherent pietas.

Where Ovid purposefully makes his story fairly clear in its positive take on theoxeny, the author of Genesis 19 crafts a theoxenic episode with more ambiguously amoral characters. In certain narrative functions, such as the properness of the hospitality provided, Genesis 19 employs a positive instantiation. With other functions, however, such as the morality of the sacrifice, or of the transformation, Genesis 19 uses negative versions of the narrative function. This ambiguity carries over into the characterization of Lot himself, the host, who is initially painted as a generous host and noble man, but whose weak and amoral traits are revealed throughout the course of the episode. That Yahweh's angels repeatedly save Lot despite his "less than virtuous behavior" reveals Yahweh's true nature of the episode: this episode is not about Lot, but demonstrates the special relationship between Yahweh and the first Patriarch, Abraham. Just as Ovid incorporates the individual episode about Philemon and Baucis into the larger fabric of his poem, the Yahwist similarly threads Genesis 19 through with themes that appear throughout the J source. After humanity is expelled from the Garden of Eden, the J source's Primeval History discusses the rise of agriculture, and then of the city, an entity that often results in "the unity of humankind" that allows, for example, the construction of the Tower of Babel. Robert Kawashima discusses how the "seamless cooperation" that allows for this undertaking

95 Andrew Feldherr, "Metamorphosis in the Metamorphoses," in The Cambridge Companion to Ovid, ed. Philip Hardie (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 170. See also for an extended discussion about the debate over the various ways in which Ovid's poem can be read.
96 Bolin, "The Role of Exchange", 55.
97 For a discussion of the J source, and the other sources of the Documentary Hypothesis, please see chapter 2 page 50-53.
"gives humans godlike creative power, which, humans being what they are, can only portend future mischief", the sort that is seen in cities like Sodom and Gomorrah. The J source author, therefore, not only interweaves the Genesis 19 episode into the larger Patriarchal narrative and story of Abraham, but also into a larger theme that runs throughout the J source material.

The parallel hospitality episode in Judges 19 draws upon the numerous allusions to and repetitions of Genesis 19 to compel the reader into a comparison. With the reader thus primed, the author of Judges 19 then removes any ambiguity present in Genesis 19, inverting any potentially positive narrative function. The result is a perversion of the Lot episode that presents the reader with the consequences of living in a lawless world ruled by individual human whims. Additionally, Yairah Amit believes that "chapters 17 and 18 alone are the conclusion of the book [of Judges]" and that chapters 19-21, including the story of the Levite's concubine, were "added to Judges at a later date" as a way to "prepare the reader to encounter the book of Samuel". Once again, however, the author of Judges 19 has crafted a story that not only refers to one other Biblical episode, namely Genesis 19, but also prepares the reader for the forthcoming material and the saga of Saul's kingship, just as Ovid and the Yahwist do with their respective texts.

The structuralist tabular presentation of these three hospitality episodes allows for the comparison of culturally, temporally, and geographically disparate texts with richly rewarding results. Not only does the tabular presentation allow the reader to better visualize the structure of each story, but it also invites the comparativist to analyze the role of each individual narrative context. As I have demonstrated in this chapter, it becomes clear when looking at this type of abstract schema how each text maintains, inverts, or generally manipulates the instantiation of

---

each narrative function to fit within its own respective patterning structure. In the next two chapters I will expand the use of my method to include a larger array of texts from a wider geo-temporal span in order to examine the motivic and thematic convergences, divergences, and manipulations.
CHAPTER 2: THE FLOOD

INTRODUCTION

Tales of a great flood event are prevalent across ancient cultures, in the form of both local and universal floods. Not only do flood stories often reflect actual natural occurrences that have been mythologized, but they also often function as a way of discussing the power and attitudes of the gods, as well as the relationship between the mortal and divine. The transmission theories of scholars such as Joseph Fontenrose are appealing and entice the reader to emulate Carolina López-Ruiz's or John Taylor's cultural contact model by connecting the textual transmission of flood narratives with the movement of certain populations from the Near East to Asia Minor. It is important, however to keep in mind what is at stake in literary comparison. Therefore, in this chapter I will continue to use the structuralist-based method that I demonstrated in the previous chapter as a means of comparing a series of widespread and geo-temporally non-tangential myths on a purely textual and motivic level.

Through the use of several modified Lévi-Straussean tables, I will break down each myth by isolating its component mythemes, or what I am terming narrative functions. From this vantage point, I will better be able to closely examine the convergences and divergences of each version. With a cursory glance these flood stories seem quite similar, which initially seems to be a notable observation. When broken down to their basic narrative and motivic parts, and then set against each other, however, the differences become increasingly apparent. Through this type of close examination, and the observation of difference, "meaning is constructed",\(^\text{101}\) since, as Lincoln states, "all knowledge, indeed all intelligibility, thus derives from consideration of data

\(^{101}\) Lincoln, "Theses on Comparison," 121.
whose differences become instructive and revealing when set against the similarities that render
them comparable".\textsuperscript{102}

The flood narratives that I have chosen to examine here appear in Liber I of Ovid's
\textit{Metamorphoses}, the \textit{Epic of Gilgamesh}, and both the J and P sources from the Biblical Book of
Genesis. Though these texts span a wide cultural, geographical, and temporal range, the notable
similarities of their flood stories invites intertextual comparison. The first texts that I will
compare are actually a couple of separate texts that were woven together into a single composite:
the Biblical Book of Genesis. This text includes probably the most widely recognized version of
the flood story, that of Noah and his ark, which occurs in the Primeval History of Genesis 1-11
cataloging events from Creation up to the Patriarchal history. The Noah episode is comprised of
the Yahwistic "J" and Priestly "P" sources. Although they were redacted together, that does not
mean the J and P sources are necessarily the same — in fact, they are quite different. The P
source is more detailed oriented and focused on fitting the flood episode into a cohesive cultic
history of Israel, while the older J source has a more archaic and mythic presentation of the flood
narrative.\textsuperscript{103} In fact, the J source has quite a bit in common with the oldest text studied in this
chapter, the \textit{Epic of Gilgamesh}. The \textit{Epic of Gilgamesh} relates the flood myth as a nested story,
told to Gilgamesh by Utanapishtim, both characters within the story itself. This Sumerian text
presents a flood that is violent and warlike, and gods who are both very emotive and very human.
The last and latest text studied in the chapter is the Ovidian flood as it is found in the
\textit{Metamorphoses}, written around 8 CE, which presents a richly detailed flood narrative. Ovid's

\textsuperscript{102} Lincoln, "Theses on Comparison," 121.
\textsuperscript{103} Joel S. Baden, \textit{The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis}
flood shares several characteristics with the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, such as the militaristic language associated with the flood event.

Despite the gap between the implicit monotheism of the J source and the polytheism of the Utanapishtim story in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, there are numerous overlaps in their conceptions of divine beings, the importance of cultic ritual, and their perception of divine-mortal relationships. By comparing these two texts first, I can situate the Yahwistic flood story within a Near Eastern context, and demonstrate its viability for comparison with the clearly polytheistic Ovidian flood story. Before approaching the comparison with the *Metamorphoses*, however, I will compare the J and P source texts from Genesis 6-9. With the Near Eastern, polytheistic origins of the J source demonstrated, the comparison of the J and P versions, both imbedded within a monotheistic religious text, will be that much richer. The cultic elements in J will more starkly contrast P's ideological motivations, thus demonstrating that the proximity and shared religious culture of these two monotheistic texts does not necessarily result in a high degree of similarity. Finally, I will compare the J and P texts to Ovid's story of Deucalion and Pyrrha. While the Yahwistic flood, with its proven correlations to the polytheistic *Epic of Gilgamesh*, is the more natural comparative counterpart to Ovid's text, I have also noted a fascinating and unexpected motivic similarity between Ovid and P. Both the Priestly source author and Ovid impose a pattern onto the creation-flood story sequence, a commonality that seems to be caused by a coincidentally similar attempt at creating cohesion within their respective works, though the motivation for the creation of cohesiveness differs.
Source Criticism in relation to the J and P Sources

It is important to discuss the Noah story in terms of its two distinct sources, rather than as a redacted whole, because each source is motivated by a different time, place, and ideology. The J source was written in Judah dating to the 10th-9th century BCE, while the P source was written much later with an important point of its development in the 6th century BCE, though its exact date is unknown. Just because these two sources appear to us as an interwoven whole does not mean that we should read it straight through and ignore the troubling inconsistencies. If we try to read Genesis 6-9 as a single whole, there are several confusing elements that become immediately apparent. One of the most salient examples of these confusions is the repetition of the command to board the ark with animals. First Elohim commands Noah to board the ark and to take "of all flesh, you shall take two of each [...] they shall be male and female" (Genesis 6:19 JPS Jewish Study Bible second edition). Then, only four verses later, Yahweh again tells Noah to board the ark, and "of every clean animal [he] shall take seven pairs, males and their mates, and of every animal that is not clean, two, a male and its mate" (Gen. 7:2). Not only is the command repeated, it is changed in a mutually exclusive manner. We encounter a similar issue with the described length of the flood. Initially, it is said, "the Flood continued forty days on the earth" (Gen. 7:17), but then at the end of the same chapter, "the waters had swelled on the earth one hundred and fifty days" (Gen. 7:24). Once again, we see a mutually exclusive repetition, an inconsistency that indicates these texts, although similar and intertwined, need to be treated as separate entities so that both their similarities and differences may be fully examined and appreciated.

---

These same sorts of inconsistencies are found throughout the first five books of the Bible when it is read as a unified piece of writing.\textsuperscript{105} The issues of consistency that were identified during the Enlightenment can be divided into three main (though overlapping) groupings: contradictions, doublets, and discontinuities.\textsuperscript{106} Contradictions can take the form of small things like the name of people or places, or large and important details like the order and events of creation. Discontinuities, on the other hand, are a classified problem that occurs when seemingly unrelated events interrupt the natural narrative course, a phenomenon that can sometimes create troubling chronological problems. Finally, doublets are simply stories that are told twice, generally stories that are similar yet mutually exclusive. Doublets can often overlap with narrative contradictions. A good illustration of a contradictory doublet is in Numbers 14 when Yahweh reveals to Moses who will survive to see the promised land after the exodus: initially it is only Caleb (Num. 14:21-24), but immediately after this, it is only Caleb and Joshua (Num. 14:29-35).\textsuperscript{107} These two revelations are almost identical, but with a slight alteration that makes them mutually exclusive. With this example in mind the two inconsistency examples from Genesis 6-9 that were discussed above seem best described as contradictory doublets.

As Joel Baden notes, these three classes of narrative inconsistencies suggest some sort of fragmented authorship, however the striking \textit{consistencies} within the narrative suggest that there is some element of continuity and unity of authorship within these five books. By reading these inconsistencies and consistencies together, four distinct sources are defined, which are "internally consistent, and markedly distinct, in [their] historical claims" and "[are] recognizable

\textsuperscript{105} Baden, \textit{Composition of the Pentateuch}, 13.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 18-19.
as an independently composed text. This theory, termed by scholars the "Documentary Hypothesis" holds that four, originally independent sources were woven together into the Pentateuch that we have received. There is a general consensus among Documentarian scholars that the Pentateuch consists of these four sources, or documents: the J (Yahwistic), E (Elohist), P (Priestly), and D (Deuteronomic). While the Deuteronomic "D" source is found mainly in the eponymous Book of Deuteronomy, the Yahwistic "J", Elohist "E", and Priestly "P" sources are all found throughout the Pentateuch.

The most salient mechanism for differentiating these three remaining sources in Genesis is the use of the name of the deity. In both the Elohist and Priestly sources throughout the Book of Genesis characters refer to the deity as El Shaddai ("God Almighty") or by the "generic title" of Elohim ("God"). In both the E and P sources, the deity's proper name, Yahweh, is not revealed until Sinai in the Book of Exodus. The E and P sources are differentiated from each other on the basis of their respective focuses. The Elohist source is narrative-based, preoccupied with matters of prophecy, and often features Elohim appearing to humans via dreams and visions. The Priestly source, by contrast, is predominantly legal and ritual in focus, centering on the affairs of the cult and the priesthood, genealogies, and dates. The E and P sources, in turn, are differentiated from the narrative "J" source, so named because its characters utilize the proper name of the deity, "Yahweh", throughout the narrative. The more archaic J source is further

---

108 Baden, Composition of the Pentateuch, 20.
109 Ibid., 21.
110 Ibid., 27-28.
characterized by a more anthropological presentation of Yahweh, and with a focus on etiology.

While these four individual sources can be identified and traced throughout the Pentateuch, one of the texts that is often noted as an unusual "showpiece" of source criticism and the Documentary Hypothesis is the flood narrative in Genesis 6-9. Unlike most doublets in the Pentateuch, which are situated next to each other within the narrative, in the flood narrative a redactor fused two separate source accounts together into a unified account. The composite text of Genesis 6-9, which is comprised of the shorter J account and the longer P account, is remarkable for several reasons. The first reason is that this single narrative has been forged from two separate sources.

The Yahwistic "J" Flood Story in Genesis

The Yahwistic story of the flood is fairly short, consisting of only 28 verses of the total 84 verses that comprise the Noah story within Genesis 6-9. It begins when Yahweh"saw how great was man's wickedness on earth" (Gen 6:5), and decided to destroy all life on earth as a result. Noah, however, "found favor with the LORD" (Gen 6:8) and thus escapes the fate shared by his fellow humans. Then Yahweh commands Noah to load himself, his family, and several pairs of animals (differing amounts based on their cleanliness) onto the ark, with the actual

113 Baden, *Composition of the Pentateuch*, 27.
116 The J flood story can be broken down verse by verse as such: 6.1-8, 7.1-5, 7.7, 7.10, 7.12, 7.16b, 7.17-18, 7.22-23, 8.2b-3a, 8.6, 8.8-12, 8.13b, 8.20-22
building of the ark a gapped event (Gen 7:1-3). At this point, Yahweh also warns Noah about the coming flood, its length, and what the extent of its destruction will be. Noah acts upon Yahweh's command and the flood that Yahweh promised finally arrives on the seventh day. Then we see the onset of the flood, and Yahweh definitively "shut him [Noah] in" (Gen 7:160 and seals the group into the ark. The description of the flood continues, and the extent of its destruction as "the waters swelled and increased greatly upon the earth" (Gen 7:18) is described. Eventually the floodwaters stop and begin to recede. After the designated forty days (Gen 8:6), Noah opens the ark's window, and then releases a dove seeking dry land several times over (Gen 8:8-12). The confirmation of dry land and Noah's exit from the ark are gapped in this story, but after those assumed actions Noah "built an altar to the LORD" (Gen 8:20) and "offered burnt offerings on the altar" (Gen 8:20) to Yahweh. Yahweh receives this sacrifice, is placated by it, and vows to never again "doom the earth because of man" (Gen 8:21) for the same reason he decided to destroy it in the first place.

Generally recognized as one of the more archaic Pentateuchal sources, the date of the Yahwistic source is thought to be around the 10th-9th centuries BCE,\(^{117}\) and the J narrative seems to draw upon older epic traditions.\(^{118}\) The J source's main identifying criteria are the use of Yahweh's proper name, and a more anthropomorphic characterization of Yahweh. On the whole, the J source is also the most complete account of Israel's history "from creation through the death of Moses",\(^{119}\) and is generally perceived as a more "artful"\(^{120}\) narrative chronicling this history. The Yahwistic flood is interesting, however. Although it fits most of the typical J characteristics,

\(^{117}\) Coogan, "Formation of the Pentateuch," 52.
\(^{119}\) Baden, *Composition of the Pentateuch*, 45.
\(^{120}\) Petersen, "The Yahwist on the Flood," 438.
such as the use of Yahweh's name, and Yahweh's physical embodiment, the Yahwistic flood account is fairly short and more of "a lifeless, chronological skeleton of the flood traditions" than an "artful" narrative.

Nevertheless, J's flood seems to fit within the larger motivic patterns of the Yahwist's Pentateuchal narrative. After creation, humanity transitions from its timeless, easy, yet somewhat infantile, existence in the Garden of Eden into the world of historical time and the experience of both pleasure and pain. This transition and the acquisition of pain, however, leads to humanity's creation of culture, which grows throughout J's Primeval History in Genesis 1-11. Robert Kawashima, in particular, lays out the patterns within J that present an etiology for human culture, and observes that the flood "marks the point at which mortality is explicitly decreed as the fate of all of humanity" as a counter to the god-like creativity they acquired during their transition. Moreover, Noah's creation of the first altar and his sacrifice of the first burnt offering after the flood fit into J's etiological chronology for the origins of sacrifice, which stems from a need to remedy humanity's post-Edenic distance from Yahweh.

The Epic of Gilgamesh Flood Story

One iteration of the Mesopotamian flood myth is the story of Utanapishtim, which can be found within the Epic of Gilgamesh. After having lost his friend, Enkidu, Gilgamesh faces his own mortality, and thusly decides to seek out eternal life. His search leads him to the immortal

121 See Gen 7:16b, "And the LORD shut him in".
125 Ibid., 495-99.
Utanaapishtim, who relates the story of the flood and his own survival. In the narrative's past the 
gods, led by Enlil, "resolved to send the deluge" (XI.14) 126 to destroy the city of Shuruppak on 
the Euphrates, where Utanaapishtim lived. The god Ea, although he had sworn to partake in the 
destruction and not to reveal the divine plans (XI.19), warns Utanaapishtim about the flood, tells 
him to build a boat, and instructs him on how to justify himself to the town (XI.24-47). 
Utanaapishtim builds the boat and stays inside as the storm appears (XI.94). Various gods take 
part in the storm, which was supposedly so violent that "whatever was light was turned into 
darkness" (XI.109), and was so warlike that even "the gods became frightened of the deluge" 
(XI.116). As the destruction begins, Ishtar screams and Belet-ili voices her regret (XI.119-126). 
After seven days of flooding and tempests, Utanaapishtim observes "the whole human race had 
turned into clay (XI.137), and his boat lands on Mount Nimush. After seven more days, 
Utanaapishtim lets out a series of birds to see if the water had receded: first a dove (XI.150), then 
a swallow (XI.153), finally a raven (XI.156). After the flood, Utanaapishtim burns a sacrifice in 
the form of "an incense offering" (XI.161) for the gods. Belet-ili responds to this, along with all 
the other gods, who "crowded round the sacrificer like flies" (XI.166) except Enlil. For his part, 
Enlil is livid when he sees Utanaapishtim's boat and realizes there are survivors of his flood 
(XI.176). Enlil and Ea have an argument, blaming each other, but ultimately Enlil concedes and 
grants Utanaapishtim and his wife immortality (XI.206-207). 

The Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh has several written versions and related poetic content, 
but its earliest recognizable written version seems to date from about 1700 BCE, making this 
flood story the oldest of those examined in this paper. The flood story of Utanaapishtim is found 
in Tablet XI of the Epic of Gilgamesh. Though not much is known about the older versions of

126 All quotations and citations will come from: Foster, Benjamin R., trans. The Epic of 
the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, scholars surmise that it was likely much shorter than the more recent eleven-tablet version, which the Mesopotamians associated with late-2nd millennium BCE scholar, Sin-lequnninni. The flood myth of Utanapishtim is an interesting version because not only is it a story within a story, but also the flood story is told from a first person perspective, that of the flood's survivor. Despite its nested nature, Utanapishtim's flood story fits well into the larger theme of "death versus immortality" that runs throughout the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. The reason Gilgamesh seeks out Utanapishtim in the first place is because his friend, Enkidu, had died despite his strength and virility. This event causes Gilgamesh to set out on a quest in search of immortality, which leads him to Utanapishtim. As the sole survivor of the widely destructive flood, Utanapishtim gains immortality in the face of the large-scale death that surrounded him.

**The Priestly "P" Flood Story in Genesis**

The other version of the flood story found within Genesis 6-9 is the Priestly version. Significantly longer than the J text, the P story is 56 of the total 84 verses. Within the confines of Genesis 6-9, the P version begins second, opening with a list of Noah's sons, and a statement of Noah's righteousness (Gen 6:9-10). After this initial statement, Elohim observes, "the earth became corrupt" (Gen 6:11) and states his consequent intent to "put an end to all flesh" (Gen 6:13). Having announced this to Noah, Elohim commands him to build an ark, and lays out the specifications (Gen 6:14-16). After reiterating his destructive intention, and specifying his use of the flood, Elohim reassures Noah of his safety by establishing a covenant with him (Gen 6:18).

---

127 Foster, trans., *Epic of Gilgamesh*, xiv.
128 The P flood story can be broken down verse by verse as such: 6.9-12, 6.13-22, 7.6, 7.8-9, 7.11, 7.13-16a, 7.19-21, 7.24-8.2a, 8.3b-5, 8.7, 8.13a, 8.14, 8.15-19, 9.1-17
129 The one of the titles of god, "Elohim", is translated as "God" in the P portions of the JPS Jewish Study Bible, however I will be using the proper title Elohim throughout my analysis when referring to a Priestly text or quotation.
Then Elohim specifies that Noah take only one pair of each animal on board (Gen 6:19-20), as well as other supplies for the stay in the ark. Noah enacts these commands, and then it is specified that Noah was 600 years old at the time of the flood (Gen 7:6). Elohim once again commands Noah to take a single pair of all animals onto the ark, this time emphasizing the standardized number despite the cleanliness or uncleanliness of the animal (Gen 7:8-9). The exact date in Noah's life on which the flood starts is specified, and then the onslaught of the flood is described in a couplet. Noah is described boarding everyone and everything onto the ark; the flood and its destructive effects are also described (Gen 7:11). The flood is described as lasting 150 days (Gen 7:24), after which Elohim ends it and induces the waters to recede. This process ends with the specific date that the ark rests on mount Ararat (Gen 8:4), and how long it takes the waters to die down. Noah releases a raven (Gen 8:7), and then the drying of the earth is described. Elohim then tells Noah to leave the ark, and commands his family to "be fertile and increase, and fill the earth" (Gen 9:1). Finally, Elohim describes the new terms of his covenant with all life, and promises "that the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh" (Gen 9:15).

While the definitive date of the P source is unknown, an important moment in its development occurs in the 6th century BCE, three to four centuries after the proposed creation of the J source. Recognized for its use of titles such as "Elohim" for God, its preference for specificities such as dates or ages, the Priestly source is so named for its general preoccupation with all things cultic and priestly. The Priestly author seems intent upon creating a chronologically coherent cultic history of Israel, and P's flood fits neatly into the timeline. Since

---

130 Coogan, "Formation of the Pentateuch," 53.
there is no real sacrifice, or any cult rituals, for P until "the tabernacle at the time of Moses".\textsuperscript{131} P's flood story must reflect this protocultic position. Where J's Noah performs the first burnt offering on the first altar after the flood, P's Noah does no such thing. Instead, Elohim institutes what David Wright terms "profane slaughter",\textsuperscript{132} or Elohim's explicit allowance of the consumption of animal flesh, thus maintaining the act of killing an animal while fitting it within the ideologically informed chronology. This specific alteration, in conjunction with the fact that P's text at 56 verses is significantly longer and more detailed than J's, has led some scholars to believe that the P author was aware of the J text, and perhaps was even the redactor.\textsuperscript{133}

\textbf{Ovidian Flood Story in the \textit{Metamorphoses}}

Ovid's version of the flood begins when Jupiter visits Lycaon's house (1.209). Already, Jupiter felt that humans were excessively evil, but wanted to confirm his suspicion. Lycaon behaves reprehensibly as a host, trying to feed Jupiter cooked human meat, even attempting to murder his guest as he slept (1.224-230). Though Jupiter punishes Lycaon by turning him into a wolf and burning his house (1.230-239), Jupiter surmises that all of humanity, "\textit{non domus una perire / digna fuit}" ("not one house deserved to fall", 1.240-241) deserves punishment, and announces his intentions to a divine council of the gods. While some of the gods are sad that no one will worship them any longer, Jupiter promises a new race "\textit{origine mira}" ("with wonderful origin", 1.252) to replace those he was about to destroy. Having decided the use of fire was too risky, Jupiter sends the South Wind with rainstorms to begin the flood (1.264). When this isn't

\begin{flushleft}

\textsuperscript{132} Wright, "Profane versus Sacrificial Slaughter," 143.

\textsuperscript{133} See Petersen, "The Yahwist on the Flood," 438. See also Anderson "From Analysis to Synthesis," 31.
\end{flushleft}
enough, Neptune orders the rivers to rush, expand, and "defrenato volvuntur in aequora cursu" ("roll along the plain of the sea with an unbridled course", 1.282), thus fully flooding the earth. The effect of the flood on people, animals, and the land is vividly described (1.286-308), and Ovid observes that not everyone drowns, but the rest die later of starvation (1.311-312). After all others are dead, one raft with two survivors remains (1.318-319). Jupiter determines they are worthy of survival, contains the storms (1.324-329), and has Neptune recall the onslaught of the rivers. The two survivors, Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha, realize that "nunc genus in nobis restat mortale duobus" ("now the human race remains in the two of us", 1.365), and therefore pray to the goddess of prophecy, Themis, for help. Themis is moved by their worship, and tells them how to repopulate the earth in the form of a riddle (1.381-383). After some hesitation and deliberation, Deucalion and Pyrrha throw stones behind them, from which new people grow (1.398-406). Then Ovid describes how the still muddy earth spontaneously generates new life forms.

Written in 8 CE during the Augustan era at the dawn of what we term the Roman Empire, the Metamorphoses coalesces various Greco-Roman myths into a single, continuous timeline. Ovid integrates this mythic narrative into the timeline of Roman history as a way of connecting the canon of Greek mythology (and thus, Greek culture), with Rome. The flood occurs in Liber I of Ovid's Metamorphoses as part of early mythic history, which includes a description of the creation of the world from out of a primordial mass (1.1-75), the creation of humans (1.76-88), and the four Metallic ages (1.89-150). The four Metallic ages are similar to the five Hesiodic Ages of Man, and begin with the Golden Age filled with morality and prosperity, descending into the Iron Age, which is filled with impiety and bloodshed. It is due to humanity's devolved moral condition in the Iron Age that Jupiter decides to destroy all life on earth with the flood;
Lycaon was just a prime example of the Iron Age's immorality, rather than the sole cause of destruction. After Jupiter achieves his goal of annihilating the human race, Deucalion and Pyrrha fulfill his pre-diluvian promise to the divine council of a new and better race. While the flood physically changes the face and character of the earth, thus fitting within the connective theme of metamorphosis running throughout the entire poem, the new human race is born of a metamorphosis from stone, which Ovid claims is the reason for humanity's hardiness as a race.

The general story of Deucalion, Pyrrha, and the flood was well circulated and widely known within the world of Greco-Roman antiquity. There is no definitive date for the inception of the association of Deucalion with the flood event, though it dates to at least the 5th century BCE. While there were several mythical flood heroes in the Greco-Roman tradition, the most popular and most well known among them was Deucalion. With this in mind, it makes sense for Ovid to have chosen to incorporate the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha's flood into his mythological history. Ovid does not, however, place the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha "as is" within his narrative mythology. In fact, there was no single version of Deucalion and Pyrrha's story, as Martin L. West notes, since it was often adapted to fit several different local mythological traditions. Perhaps it is for this reason that some believe Deucalion's flood to be a local event, while some believe it to be a universal event.

---

138 R. Scott Smith, "Bundling Myth, Bungling Myth: The Flood in Ancient and Modern Handbooks of Myth," Archiv für Religionsgeschichte 16, no. 1 (2015): 248. Smith states the several Greek philosophers, such as Aristocles and Aristotle, believed the flood to have been a local, rather than universal, catastrophe.
Ovid describes the effect of his flood, which had the result that "iamque mare et tellus nullum discrimen habebant: / omnia pontus erant, deerant quoque litora ponto" ("and now the sea and earth were having no distinction: everything was sea; shores were lacking from any sea", 1.291-92).\textsuperscript{139} The floodwaters created a sea without shores (litora), and nowhere was there any distinction (discrimen) between the sea (mare) and the land (tellus), all of which aptly designates Ovid's version of Deucalion's flood as a universal one.\textsuperscript{140} The nature of the flood itself, however, is not the only choice that Ovid made in order to fit the flood story within his mythico-historical timeline. While the flood was generally recognized as a prehistoric event within the Greco-Roman world, Ovid specifically states that Deucalion and Pyrrha "adorant / fatidicamque Themin, quae tunc oracula tenebat" ("they worship [...] prophetic Themis, who was then holding the oracles", 1.320-21). By naming the goddess Themis, and by specifying that she was holding the oracles (oracla tenebat) at that time (tunc),\textsuperscript{141} Ovid sets up his mythico-temporal period: a time during which Apollo was not the deity of prophecy. Zeus and Hermes more often aid Deucalion and Pyrrha in the aftermath of the flood,\textsuperscript{142} so Ovid's use of Themis (who appears in no other Deucalion stories)\textsuperscript{143} signals to the reader that this is the early mythic time period.

\textbf{Comparison and Analysis of the Flood Stories}

The following tables maps out the narrative functions, which I have isolated within the flood myth type, as they appear in each of the examined flood episodes. I will be working with

\textsuperscript{139} All text in Latin will come from Ovid, \textit{Metamorphoses Books 1-5}, ed. and commentator William S. Anderson (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1997). All translations from Latin into English will be my own from this point forward.
\textsuperscript{140} Smith, "Bundling Myth, Bungling Myth," 248. Smith states Near Eastern literatures "present the flood as extinction-level without exception".
\textsuperscript{141} "tunc" most commonly translates to "then", but it does refer to a specific temporal point.
\textsuperscript{142} West, "The Flood Myth," 253.
\textsuperscript{143} Smith, "Bundling Myth, Bungling Myth," 247.
the same definition of a narrative function, or what Lévi-Strauss termed a "mytheme", that is a fundamental component element of a certain myth, in this case flood myths. For each of the individual narrative functions, I have pulled a few quotes or brief descriptions regarding the nature of this function within each respective text. This tabular schema allows for the comparison, not only of each function within its narrative context, but also against other iterations, inversions, or overlaps across different flood texts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Function Pattern</th>
<th>J Source</th>
<th>P Source</th>
<th>Epic of Gilgamesh Tablet XI</th>
<th>The Metamorphoses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision To Send Flood</td>
<td>&quot;The LORD saw how great was man's wickedness on earth, and how every plan devised by his mind was nothing but evil all the time. And the LORD regretted that He had made man on earth, and His heart was saddened. The LORD said, 'I will blot out from the earth the men whom I created—men together with beasts, creeping things, and birds of the sky; for I regret that I made them.'&quot; (Gen 6:5-7)</td>
<td>&quot;When God saw how corrupt the earth was, for all flesh had corrupted its ways on earth, God said to Noah, 'I have decided to put an end to all flesh, for the earth is filled with lawlessness because of them: I am about to destroy them with the earth.'&quot; (Gen 6:12-13)</td>
<td>&quot;The great gods resolved to send the deluge&quot; (line 14)</td>
<td>Now, wherever Nereus echoes around the whole globe, human kind must be destroyed by me [...] with all [things] having been tested first, but the incurable body must be cut off with a sword, lest the healthy part be dragged.&quot; (lines 187-191)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality of Condemned</td>
<td>&quot;The LORD saw how great was man's wickedness on earth, and how every plan devised by his mind was nothing but evil all the time.&quot; (Gen 6:5)</td>
<td>&quot;The earth became corrupt before God; the earth was filled with lawlessness.&quot; (Gen 6:11)</td>
<td>&quot;One house fell, but not one house was deserving to be destroyed. Wherever the earth extends, the savage furies rule. You would believe they were sworn into crime! Let them all give over quickly to suffer the punishments which they deserved, thus my thought stands.&quot; (1.240-243)</td>
<td>&quot;And already he [Jove] was about to scatter lightning on all the lands; but he feared, lest by chance the sacred heaven should catch flames [...] a different punishment is settled, to destroy the mortal race below waves and to send down clouds from the whole sky.&quot; (1.253-261)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;All in whose nostrils was the merest breath of life, all that was on dry land, died. All existence on earth was blotted out—man, cattle, creeping things, and birds of the sky; they were blotted out from the earth.&quot; (Gen 7:22-23)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;[Jove] promises a different race than the first people, of marvelous origin.&quot; (1.251-252)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Revelation</td>
<td>&quot;Then the LORD said to Noah [...] For in seven days' time I will make it rain upon the earth, forty days and forty nights, and I will blot out from the earth all existence that I created.&quot; (Gen 7:1, v.4)</td>
<td>&quot;God said to Noah, 'I have decided to put an end to all flesh, for the earth is filled with lawlessness because of them: I am about to destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopher wood [...]&quot; (Gen 6:13-14)</td>
<td>&quot;[Ea] repeated their plans to the reed fence: / 'Reed fence, reed fence, wall, wall! / Listen, O reed fence! Pay attention, O wall! / O Man of Shuruppak, son of Ubar-Tutu, / wreck house, build boat, / forsake possessions and seek life, / belongings reject and life save! / Take aboard the boat seed of all livings things.&quot; (lines 20-27)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Survival</td>
<td>&quot;Of every clean animal you shall take seven pairs, males and their mates, and of every animal that is not clean, two, a male and its mate; of the birds of the sky also, seven pairs, male and female, to keep seed alive upon the earth.&quot; (Gen 7:2-3)</td>
<td>&quot;And of all that lives, of all flesh, you shall take two of each into the ark to keep alive with you; they shall be male and female. From birds of every kind, cattle of every kind, every kind of creeping thing on earth, two of each shall come to you to stay alive.&quot; (Gen 6:19-20)</td>
<td>&quot;What living creatures I [Utanapishtim] had I loaded upon her [...] Beasts of the steppe, wild animals of the steppe&quot; (lines 84-86)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood Length</td>
<td>&quot;The rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. (Gen 7:12)&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;And when the waters had swelled on the earth one hundred and fifty days, God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark and God caused a wind to blow across the earth, and the waters subsided.&quot; (Gen 7:24-8:2)</td>
<td>&quot;Six days and seven night / the wind continued, the deluge and windstorm leveled the land. / When the seventh day arrived, / the windstorm and deluge left off their battle&quot; (lines 130-133)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>&quot;At the end of one hundred and fifty days the waters diminished &quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Now the sea has a shore, the channel captures the full rivers, the rivers subside and the hills are seen to emerge, the ground rises, the places arise from the diminishing waves, and after a long day, the forests reveal tops having been laid bare and the forests hold forsaken mud in the leaves.&quot; (1.343-347, emphasis)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision To End Flood</strong></td>
<td>&quot;God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark, and God caused a wind to blow across the earth, and the waters subsided.&quot; (Gen 8:1)</td>
<td>&quot;When the seventh day arrived, / the windstorm and deluge left off their battle, / which had struggled, like a woman in labor. / The sea grew calm, the tempest stilled, the deluge ceased.&quot; (lines 132-135)</td>
<td>&quot;When Jupiter observes the globe to be underwater with clear swamps and observes only one man from so many thousands to survive and observes only one woman from so many thousands to survive, both innocent, both worshipers of divinity, he scattered the clouds and the distant rainclouds with the North Wind and he revealed the lands to the sky and the ethers to the lands.&quot; (1.324-329)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision Not To Repeat Flood</strong></td>
<td>&quot;The LORD smelled the pleasing odor and the LORD said to Himself: 'Never again will I doom the earth because of man, since the devisings of man's mind are evil from his youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living being as I have done. So long as the earth endures, / Seedtime and harvest, / Cold and heat, / Summer and winter, / Day and night / Shall not cease.'&quot; (Gen 8:21-22)</td>
<td>&quot;I [God] now establish My covenant with you [Noah] and your offspring to come, and with every living thing that is with you [...] I will maintain My covenant with you: never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.&quot; (Gen 9:9-11)</td>
<td>&quot;How could you, irrationally, have brought on the flood? / Punish the wrongdoer for his wrongdoing, / punish the transgressor for his transgression, / but be lenient, lest he be cut off, / bear with him, lest he [...] / Instead of your bringing on a flood, / let the lion rise up to diminish the human race! / Instead of your bringing on a flood, / let the wolf rise up to diminish the human race! / Instead of your bringing on a flood, / let famine rise up to wreak havoc in the land! / Instead of your bringing on a flood, / let pestilence rise up to wreak havoc in the land!&quot; (lines 186-198)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morality of</strong></td>
<td>&quot;But Noah found favor with&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Noah was a righteous man; he&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I [Utanapishtim] send up on&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **"there was not any man**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survivor</th>
<th>the LORD&quot; (Gen 6:8)</th>
<th>&quot;Then the LORD said to Noah, 'Go into the ark, with all your household, for you alone have I found righteous before Me in this generation.'&quot; (Gen 7:1)</th>
<th>&quot;Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.&quot; (Gen 7:23)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was blameless in his age; Noah walked with God.&quot; (Gen 6:9)</td>
<td>&quot;But I [God] will establish My covenant with you [Noah], and you shall enter the ark, with your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives.&quot; (Gen 6:18)</td>
<td>board all my family and kin [...] all types of skilled craftsmen I sent up on board&quot; (lines 85-86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>better nor more loving of equity than that one [Deucalion], nor any woman [Pyrrha] more fearful of the gods.&quot; (1.322-323)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;both innocent, both worshipers of divinity&quot; (1.327)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine-Mortal Interaction</td>
<td>&quot;Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking of every clean animal and of every clean bird, he offered burnt offerings on the altar. The LORD smelled the pleasing odor [...]&quot; (Gen 8:20-21)</td>
<td>&quot;But I [God] will establish My covenant with you [Noah]&quot; (Gen 6:18)</td>
<td>&quot;nevertheless the loss of the human race was a source of grief for all, and, what form will there be to the earth bereft of mortals, they ask, by who may frankincense be born onto the altars&quot; (1.246-249)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Every creature that lives shall be yours [humans'] to eat [...] you must not, however, eat flesh with its life-blood in it.&quot; (Gen 9:3-4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repopulation</td>
<td>&quot;God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, 'Be fertile and increase, and fill the earth.'&quot; (Gen 9:1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The goddess [Themis] is moved and gave [this] fate: 'depart from the temple and veil [your] head and release&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Be fertile, then, and increase; abound on the earth and increase on it." (Gen 9:7)

your encircled garments and throw behind [your] back the bones of your great mother." (1.381-383)

"the great parent is earth: I [Deucalion] think the bones to be said [are] the stones in the body of the earth; we are ordered to throw those behind [our] backs." (1.393-394)

"and in a brief space [of time] by the divine will of the gods the rocks hurled by the hands of the man derived the shape of men, and from the woman's throw woman is revived." (1.411-413)

Figure 1
Mapping Narrative Function
Comparing Floods in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the J Source

It is clear, when looking at Figure 1, that these four texts have remarkable overlap. In particular, there are notable similarities between the Yahwistic flood narrative and Utanapishtim's flood in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which the J source does not share with its Genesis partner, the P source. While J (and Biblical text as a whole) is monotheistic, and the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is very obviously polytheistic, there are numerous, clear parallels between these two flood stories. Some such small narrative details include the importance of seven days in both flood narratives. In the J text, Yahweh tells Noah that, "in seven days' time I will make it rain upon the earth" (Gen 7:4), while in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, "six days and seven nights / the wind continued, the deluge and windstorm leveled the land. / When the seventh day arrived, / the windstorm and deluge left off their battle / [...] The sea grew calm, the tempest stilled, the deluge ceased" (XI.130-135). Although the use of the seven days differs between these two texts, the fact that the same timeframe appears in both texts is notable, particularly in light of its absence from both the P source and the *Metamorphoses*.

Another shared detail is the use of a dove. After resting for seven more days after the flood's end, Utanapishtim "brought out a dove and set it free" (XI.150), just as Noah "sent out the dove to see whether the waters had decreased" (Gen 8:8). For both Utanapishtim and Noah, the first bird returns signaling the presence of water. Noah continues to release the dove in seven-day increments until "it did not return to him any more" (Gen 8:9-12), while Utanapishtim releases a series of different birds, including a swallow and a raven, until finally the last bird "did not turn back" (XI.158). The overlap of these small, yet particular details begins to suggest a Near

---

144 It is interesting to note that, while the J source uses only a dove, the P source states that Noah "sent out the raven; it went to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth" (Gen 8:7).
Eastern context for the Yahwistic flood narrative, a connection that is reinforced through some of the parallels between the larger narrative functions.

The first major parallel one might notice in Figure 1 is the divine revelation. Both Yahweh and Ea choose to forewarn a single human of the coming catastrophe, an act that ensures the survival of the human race. In the Yahwistic flood story, Yahweh "said to Noah, 'Go into the ark, with all your household" (Gen 7:1) and the god Ea similarly tells Utanapishtim to "wreck house, build boat" (XI.24). Ea's command is to actually "build" the boat, and only after that to "take aboard the boat seed of all living things" (XI.27), while Yahweh commands Noah to "go into the ark" (Gen 7:1), which is presumably already built, though that narrative phase is gapped.145 Yahweh also reveals why the ark is necessary, saying that "in seven days' time I will make it rain upon the earth, forty days and forty nights, and I will blot out from the earth all existence that I created" (Gen 7:1-4). In the J version, Yahweh is extremely explicit, and his intentions are clear to both Noah and the reader, thus Noah is able to do "just as the LORD commanded him" (Gen 7:5). Ea's revelation reads closer to a riddle. Even though Ea clearly tells Utanapishtim to build a boat, providing specifications for the structure, he never says why it needs to be built, or how long Utanapishtim has to build it. Despite the higher level of abstraction, Utanapishtim states, "I understood full well" (XI.32).

The mortal-divine interaction does not cease after the flood, but instead takes on a cultic quality that is separate from the Priestly source's post-flood interactions. After the Yahwistic flood, "Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking of every clean animal and of every clean bird, he offered burnt offerings on the altar" (Gen 8:20), an action which very closely resembles Utanapishtim's post-flood actions, when he "set up an incense offering on the summit of the

145 While the command to build the ark is gapped in the J source, they are present in the P source in Genesis 6:14-16, which closely parallels the command and specifications provided by Ea in Tablet XI lines 28-31.
mountains, / [he] arranged seven and seven cult vessels, / [he] heaped reeds, cedar, and myrtle in their bowls" (XI.161-163). Although the content of the offering differs between these two texts, the cultic qualities are quite similar. The number seven crops up again as an important amount, as Utanapishtim "arranged seven and seven cult vessels (XI.162, emphasis added), and Noah takes "of every clean animal" (Gen 8:20), which earlier Yahweh had commanded to take "of every clean animal you shall take seven pairs, males and their mates" (Gen 7:2, emphasis added). The Yahwistic source and the Epic of Gilgamesh share seven as an important number that appears to have cultic significance, even if the sacrificial material differs.

Another clear convergence is the nature of the sacrifice, which is burnt in both stories: the J source explicitly names Noah's sacrifice as "burnt offerings" (Gen 8:20), while Utanapishtim's offering is not explicitly labeled as "burnt", it is "an incense offering" (XI.161), which implies a burnt offering as incense is most usually burned to create smoke. The smoke from both offerings makes its way to the respective deities, and "the LORD smelled the pleasing odor" (Gen 8:21) in the Yahwistic story just as "the gods smelled the savor, / the gods smelled the sweet savor, / the gods crowded round the sacrificer like flies" (XI.163-165) in Utanapishtim's flood story. The role that each burnt offering plays in the post-diluvian narrative is also quite similar. After Yahweh "smelled the pleasing odor" (Gen 8:21), immediately he decided, "never again will I doom the earth because of man [...] nor will I ever again destroy every living being as I have done" (Gen 8:21). Although the burnt offering is not the only motivation for Yahweh's decision, it is closely associated with his change of heart. Similarly, Belet-ili, who earlier lamented the destructive flood, comes to the incense offering and states, "I shall be mindful of these days and not forget, not ever!" (XI.170), while also condemning Enlil's decision of having "irrationally, brought on the flood, / and marked my people for destruction!" (XI.172-173). In both of these texts, the
reception of the burnt offering by the gods is a turning point in the flood narrative: it results in a condemnation of, or promise to refrain from, the destructive flood. The function of the offering in both narratives is fascinating for several reasons, such as the fairly direct influence and interaction between mortals and deities.

This interaction, particularly the ability for the scent of the burnt offering to influence the deity, suggests a shared anthropomorphic characterization of the deities in both texts. That Yahweh "smelled the pleasing odor" (Gen 8:21), and that "the gods smelled the savor, / the gods smelled the sweet savor" (XI.164-165) suggests a physicality and an ability to interact with the material world in a tactile way. In fact, earlier in the J narrative, as the flood begins "the LORD shut him [Noah] in [the ark]" (Gen 7:16), physically interacting with the object of the ark.

Yahweh's embodiment has parallels in Utanapishtim's gods, such as when "Enlil came up into the boat, / leading me [Utanapishtim] by the hand, he brought me up too. / He brought my wife up and had her kneel beside me. / He touched our brows" (XI.202-205). The deities in both texts are highly physical and anthropomorphic, but they are also characterized as rather humanistic on top of that. As the flood begins in the Epic of Gilgamesh, "Ishtar screamed like a woman in childbirth, / and sweet-voiced Belet-ili wailed aloud: / 'would that day had come to naught, / when I spoke up for evil in the assembly of the gods! [...] It was I myself who brought my people into the world, / now, like a school of fish, they chose up the sea!' / The supreme gods were weeping with her" (XI.119-127). The gods in the Epic of Gilgamesh cry, scream, and express their regret for the destruction of humanity — they exhibit a painful grief in response to widespread death that is very human. Similarly, when J's Yahweh sees humanity's wickedness, "the LORD regretted that He had made man on earth, and His heart was saddened" (Gen 6:6). Though Yahweh's regret is not as vividly portrayed as Utanapishtim's gods, still he feels grief for
what his creation has become, though Yahweh sends the flood because of this regret and because "His heart was saddened" (Gen 6:6), rather than feeling this regret as a result of the flood. The humanistic character of both J's Yahweh and the Epic of Gilgamesh's gods, the perceived physicality of the gods, and the ability for mortals and divinities to interact quite directly demonstrates the conception of human-divine relationships shared between these ancient Near Eastern cultures. It also shows us the importance placed upon cultic ritual by both Mesopotamian and ancient Israelite peoples.

Despite the strong parallels and convergences between the Yahwistic flood story and Utanapishtim's flood in the Epic of Gilgamesh, the divide between the monotheism of J and the polytheism of the Epic of Gilgamesh are clear. The most salient divergence on this point being the presence of multiple gods in Utanapishtim's story, as compared to the presence only of Yahweh in J's flood story. While it seems like a rather obvious difference, it has several interesting narrative consequences. Due to Yahweh's singularity in J's flood story, his decision to "blot out from the earth the men whom [He] created—together with beasts, creeping things, and birds of the sky" (Gen 6:7) is absolute and unopposed, as is his decision to reveal the catastrophe to Noah and save him. By contrast, a divine council decides on Utanapishtim's flood. Instead of one god making a decision, "the great gods resolved to send the deluge, / their father Anu was sworn, / the counselor the valiant Enlil, / their throne-bearer Ninurta, / their canal-officer Ennugi, / their leader Ea was sworn with them" (XI.14-19). This group of gods all agreed, and seem to all have "sworn" an oath, to send this flood. For this reason, Ea's revelation of the flood to Utanapishtim is in defiance of the divine council. This contrast accounts for the different mode

146 See Shaviv, "The Polytheistic Origins," for a more extreme understanding of the Biblical flood story's polytheism. In his article, Shaviv argues that Elohim and Yahweh are two separate deities that coexist in the flood story, thus demonstrating its polytheistic nature.
of revelation utilized by Yahweh and Ea. Yahweh's singularity means that his decisions are unopposed, and thus he is able to interact with Noah through direct discourse and clear imperative commands. Ea does not have this freedom, as he "was sworn with them" (XI.19), i.e. the divine council, and thus indirectly "repeated their plans to the reed fence" (XI.20), commanding Utanapishtim in a more abstract manner by sending him "a dream and so he heard the secret of the gods" (XI.200). The roundabout artifice of Ea's interaction with Utanapishtim is a direct result of the *Epic of Gilgamesh's* polytheistic nature, and Yahweh's succinct directness is a result of the Bible's monotheism.

The monotheistic nature of J's account also imbues the flood story with an undercurrent of morality, which is absent from the polytheistic story of Utanapishtim. As illustrated in Figure 1, in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* the flood seems to be essentially unmotivated. The gods just "resolved to send the deluge" (XI.14) for no explicit reason: no judgment is passed on the humans they've decided to destroy, it seems to be an arbitrary decision. Meanwhile, J's Yahweh "saw how great was man's wickedness on earth, and how every plan devised by his mind was nothing but evil all the time. And the LORD regretted that He had made man on earth, and His heart was saddened" (Gen 6:5-6). The motivation for J's flood is quite clear. Humanity is so wicked that Yahweh "regretted that He had made man on earth" (Gen 6:6), thus decides to "blot out from the earth the men whom [He] created" (Gen 6:7). Not only is his reasoning explicit, but his decision is morally motivated. Yahweh does not arbitrarily decide to destroy humanity, as the divine council in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* does, but does so because of "how great was man's wickedness on earth" (Gen. 6:5) — it was so great, in fact, that Yahweh's "heart was saddened" (Gen 6:6). There is a clear departure here between the clearly motivated Yahweh, and the arbitrary decision of the divine council to send Utanapishtim's flood.
Similarly unmotivated is the choice of Utanapishtim as the flood's survivor. When Ea "repeated their plans" (XI.20) so that Utanapishtim "understood full well" (XI.32), there is no reason why it was Utanapishtim rather than anyone else. The only reason a human was chosen at all was because Ea disagreed with the severity of Enlil's punishment, arguing "punish the wrongdoer for his wrongdoing, / punish the transgressor for his transgression, / but be lenient, lest he be cut off" (XI.187-189). While this statement seems to imply that humanity was somehow at fault and deserving of a punishment, there is not explicit judgment passed on them; Utanapishtim's survival is passed off as happenstance by Ea who claims "it was not I who disclosed the secret of the great gods, / I made Atrahasis have a dream and so he heard the secret of the gods" (XI.199-200). Once again, Yahweh's singularity means that his decisions are unopposed, thus choosing Noah to survive the flood is not an act of defiance. Noah is a purposeful choice since he "found favor with the LORD" (Gen 6:8), and Yahweh tells him "you alone have I found righteous before Me in this generation" (Gen 7:1). Yahweh has a special relationship with Noah, and he also deems Noah worthy of survival in the face of the rest of humanity's "wickedness on earth" (Gen 6:5). The contrast between Noah's righteousness and humanity's "wickedness" (Gen 6:5) imbues Yahweh's decision with moral undertones.

Comparison with the polytheistic Epic of Gilgamesh brings the monotheistic motivations and moral undertones of the Yahwistic flood story into focus. Yet, as we saw, the way that both texts conceptualize the physicality of their deities, the divine-human relationship, and the importance of cultic ritual is not as different as one might guess when comparing a polytheistic and monotheistic text. In fact, those similarities suggest that although J is a monotheistic text, it

---

147 The special relationship between Noah and Yahweh will later be echoed in the relationship between Abraham and Yahweh in Genesis 18-19 examined in the previous chapter. Just as Yahweh saves Noah's family on behalf of Noah's own deserving qualities, Yahweh will once again save Lot (Abraham's family) on account of Abraham's deserving qualities.
has polytheistic, Mesopotamian origins. With this context in mind, the comparison of J with its later Biblical counterpart, P, will be more fruitful. By understanding the importance of cultic ritual and the embodied characterization of deities that J and the *Epic of Gilgamesh* share, the ideological differences and narrative similarities between the J and P texts will be painted in even starker contrast, which is important, as Lincoln reminds us, since "meaning is constructed through contrast". ¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Lincoln, "Theses on Comparison", 121.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genesis &quot;J&quot; verse</th>
<th>Yahwistic account</th>
<th>Narrative Pattern</th>
<th>Genesis &quot;P&quot; verse</th>
<th>Priestly account</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:5</td>
<td>&quot;The LORD saw how great was man's wickedness on earth, and how every plan devised by his mind was nothing but evil all the time.&quot;</td>
<td>Deity sees evil/outrage</td>
<td>6:11-12</td>
<td>&quot;The earth became corrupt before God; the earth was filled with lawlessness. When God saw how corrupt the earth was, for all flesh had corrupted its ways on earth...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:7</td>
<td>&quot;The LORD said, 'I will blot out from the earth the men whom I created—men together with beasts, creeping things, and birds of the sky...&quot;</td>
<td>Deity announces intention to destroy creation</td>
<td>6:13</td>
<td>&quot;. . . God said to Noah, 'I have decided to put an end to all flesh, for the earth is filled with lawlessness became of them: I am about the destroy them with the earth.'&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:8</td>
<td>&quot;But Noah found favor with the LORD.&quot;</td>
<td>Deity chooses a worthy survivor</td>
<td>6:18</td>
<td>&quot;But I [God] will establish My covenant with you...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:2-3</td>
<td>&quot;Of every clean animal you shall take seven pairs, males and their mates, and of every animal that is not clean, two, a male and its mate; of the birds of the sky also, seven pairs, male and female&quot;</td>
<td>Deity ensures maintenance of life on earth</td>
<td>6.19-20</td>
<td>&quot;And of all that lives, of all flesh, you shall take two of each into the ark to keep alive with you; they shall be male and female. From birds of every kind, cattle of every kind, every kind of creeping thing on earth, two of each shall come to you to stay alive.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:8-12</td>
<td>&quot;Then he sent out the dove to see whether the waters had decreased from the surface of the ground. But the dove could not find a resting place for its foot, and returned to him to the ark, for there was water over all the earth. So putting out his hand, he took it into the ark with him. He waited another seven days, and again sent out the dove from the ark. The dove came back to him toward evening, and there in its bill was a plucked-off olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the waters had decreased on the earth. He waited still another seven days and sent the dove forth; and it did not return to him any more.&quot;</td>
<td>After Flood, survivor uses bird as a sign of safety</td>
<td>8:7</td>
<td>&quot;...and send out the raven; it went to and fro until the water had dried up from the earth.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:21-22</td>
<td>&quot;. . . the LORD said to Himself: 'Never again will I doom the earth because of man... So long as the earth endures, / Seedtime and harvest, / Cold and heat, / Summer and winter, / Day and night / Shall not cease.'&quot;</td>
<td>Deity resolves never to repeat the Flood destruction</td>
<td>9.11</td>
<td>&quot;...never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2
The Basic Structure of the Biblical Flood Narrative: Comparing J and P
As Figure 2 illustrates, both the J and P sources follow the same basic flood narrative structure. Not only the similarities, but also the repeated information is immediately obvious when both outlines are set parallel to each other. In J, Yahweh "saw" (Gen 6:5) humanity's "wickedness" (Gen 6:5), and then again Elohim literally "saw" (Gen 6:12) the corruption of the earth in P. Twice, the decision to destroy the earth and all living things is made by the deity, twice the decision to save Noah is made, twice the command to save pairs of animals is given, twice a bird is sent out of the ark to see if the earth had dried, and twice the deity decides to never again destroy all life. Even beyond this basic parallel outline, numerous scenes within the flood narrative occur as doublets. And yet, despite the fact that the J and P sources are intricately woven together within the Genesis text, each source is still distinct. Even though the redactor created a composite text from the J and P sources, we are still able to identify each source, and separate the strands easily using the same criteria as we would anywhere else in the Pentateuch.

This is made easier, as Baruch Halpern notes, because the redactor "elected not to alter the internal order of either source", and merely interspersed them amongst each other. The numerous similarities between their respective plot structures, as noted in Figure 2, have led many scholars to believe that the P source author was aware of the J source, and could even have been the Redactor. Though seemingly counterintuitive, if the Priestly author was indeed aware of the J source while writing the P flood version, this could account for several of the differences between the two flood stories. Nevertheless, when the two sources are separated from each other, therefore, both the P and J sources read as "a continuous, complete, and independent narrative.

149 Halpern, "What They Don't Know," 18.
150 Anderson "From Analysis to Synthesis," 31. See also Petersen, "The Yahwist on the Flood," 438.
with its own character, ideology, and goal.\textsuperscript{151} The most obvious difference is that P's version at 56 verses is significantly longer than J's at 28 verses.\textsuperscript{152} The Yahwistic version is not only shorter than the Priestly version, but is, as David Petersen describes it, much more skeletal in comparison.\textsuperscript{153} The P version provides a more fully fleshed flood account, coloring the narrative with intricate details about the form and construction of the ark (Gen 6:14-16), as well as the precise dates of the flood events within Noah's life span (Gen 7:6, 7:11, 8:13-14).

P's account also has a much richer description of the flood event itself, in which "all the fountains of the great deep burst apart, / and all the floodgates of the sky broke open" (Gen 7:11), which imbues the catastrophe with something like cosmic significance. The flood behavior in P's account is more fully rendered, and consists of more dynamic phenomena as "the waters had swelled [...] upon the earth" and "all the highest mountains everywhere under the sky were covered", all of which only subsided when "God caused a wind to blow across the earth" and "the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were stopped up" (Gen 7:19-21, 7:24-8:2). This notably descriptive account stands in stark contrast to the less dramatic flood event of J's account. In the Yahwistic account, there is no dramatic onset of cosmic destruction, merely "the waters of the Flood came upon the earth" (Gen 7:10) as "the rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights" (Gen 7:12). After this rather anticlimactic flood event, "the waters swelled and increased" (Gen 7:18) and eventually "the rain from the sky was held back; the waters then receded steadily from the earth" (Gen 8:2-3). Though both P and J convey the same general story, J's version is much more simplistic and more grounded in almost realistic phenomena compared to the grandeur of P's flood phenomena.

\textsuperscript{151} Wright, "Profane versus Sacrificial Slaughter," 127.
\textsuperscript{152} See Halpern, "What They Don't Know," 18, for a full list of which verses in Gen. 6-9 are attributed to which source.
\textsuperscript{153} Petersen, "The Yahwist on the Flood," 438.
This discrepancy in description does not, alone, suggest that there is any sort of relationship between the P and J versions of the flood story — in fact, it could very well be attributed to a difference in style. What does suggest an awareness of the J version on the part of the Priestly author, however, is the fact that the P flood account seems to resolve several contradictions and fills certain plot holes found in the J account.\(^{154}\) An important plot point that P supplies is "make yourself an ark" (Gen 6:14).\(^{155}\) Though it seems like a small and somewhat obvious moment, in J's version the narrative jumps from the statement that "Noah found favor with the LORD" (Gen. 6:8) to Yahweh's command for Noah to "go into the ark" (Gen 7:1), with the existence of the ark essentially implied or assumed. It appears that P was aware of, and even interacting with, the J version of the story, and thus decided to solidly assign the creation of the ark to Noah.

Another notable contradiction within J that is resolved by P has to do with the morality of the flood as a punishment. In the J account, Yahweh decides that He "will blot out from the earth the men whom [He] created—men together with beasts, creeping things, and birds of the sky; for [He] regret[s] that [He] made them" (Gen 6:7), even though He has only seen "how great was man's wickedness on earth" (Gen 6:5, emphasis added). Yahweh has only pronounced judgment upon humanity, has only deemed humanity deserving of punishment, yet simultaneously sends a punishment that will not only destroy humanity, but will also destroy all other living creatures, even those undeserving of such a harsh punishment. The fact that Yahweh acknowledges and announces that he will punish all living things indiscriminately is a contradiction that calls into question the morality of his decision to send the flood at all. In what could be an effort to correct

---

\(^{154}\) Wright, "Profane versus Sacrificial Slaughter," 129.

\(^{155}\) A characteristic that is shared with the flood story from the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. See Tablet XI lines 128-131.
this, P's Elohim states, "the earth became corrupt" (Gen 6:11, emphasis added) and that "all flesh had corrupted its ways on earth" (Gen 6:12, emphasis added). By making the claim that not just "man" (Gen 6:5) but "all flesh" (Gen 6:12), which would include all animals, was corrupted, P fully justifies Elohim's decision "to put an end to all flesh" (Gen 6:13), wiping away the moral ambiguity of the flood event as a punishment.

Enrichment of the plot accounts for many of the inconsistencies between the J and P versions, however several of the narrative divergences stem from the differing ideologies of the source authors. The Priestly author is so named because of its concern with cultic elements (especially the priesthood) — this is a concern that has a strong presence in the P flood story, and further differentiates its text from J's version. The Yahwistic narrative clearly contains sacrificial elements. Yahweh seems to somehow expect or interact with this sacrificial element, since he commands Noah to take "seven pairs" of "every clean animal", and "of every animal that is not clean, two" (Gen 7:2). The connotations of purity, impurity, and sacrifice in Yahweh's command implies that he acknowledges, condones, and participates in religious sacrifice, as does the fact that Yahweh appears placated by a sacrifice. After the flood, "Noah built an altar to the LORD" and "he offered burnt offerings on the altar" (Gen 8:20), which Yahweh "smelled", found "pleasing", and thus stated "never again will I doom the earth because of man [...] nor will I ever again destroy every living being, as I have done" (Gen 8:21). The elements of sacrificial worship are unavoidable within the J version of the flood, a fact that is troubling to the Priestly author who believes that "sacrifice begins only with the tabernacle at the time of Moses". As a result

---

of this belief, the Priestly author "recontextualizes" J's flood account so that it fits within his conception of Israel's cultic history.

The Priestly author's efforts to remove any trace of sacrifice from the flood story can be seen in one of the most noticeable contradictions within Genesis 6-9: the number of animals Noah is commanded to save. While J's Yahweh designates a different number of animal pairs based on the cleanliness or purity of the animal (Gen 7:2) in regards to its sacrificial viability, P's Elohim tells Noah to take "two of each" kind "of all that lives, of all flesh" (Gen 6:19). In standardizing the number of animal pairs for Noah to save, the Priestly author removes any implications of Noah's future sacrifice and the deity's participation. In fact, P continues to craft a protocultic flood story by removing Noah's post-flood sacrifice altogether — replacing it with what Wright terms "profane slaughter" and Elohim's covenant with all living things (Gen 9:8-11). That the Priestly author seems to scrub out the obvious sacrificial elements found in the Yahwistic flood story does suggest that there was some form of interaction between the J text and the P author. The specific divergences from the more archaic J flood narrative indicate an awareness of — and perhaps even a response from — the ideologically informed P text, as do the pointed thematic and motivic alterations made by the Priestly author.

The Priestly author's descriptions of the flood are not just more vibrant than those of the Yahwistic author; they also seem to purposefully connect the flood story with the story of first creation. Wright notes that P's flood is "tied phenomenologically to its creation story" in a way

157 Wright, "Profane versus Sacrificial Slaughter," 134. What Wright is referring to here is an event that occurs in the Book of Leviticus, which is much later than the Book of Genesis.
158 Wright, "Profane versus Sacrificial Slaughter," 143. Profane slaughter is Wright's term for Elohim's proclamation that humans are permitted to kill (i.e. slaughter) animals for food in Gen. 9:3.
that J's is not.\footnote{Wright, "Profane versus Sacrificial Slaughter," 138.} As I noted above, the P text richly describes the onset of the flood during which "all the fountains of the great deep burst apart, / and the floodgates of the sky broke open" (Gen 7:11), a description that is not only vivid, but also elevates the event to a cosmic level. The language of P's flood recalls that of P's creation story, and seems to invert the separation of "the water which was below" (Gen 1:7) from "the water which was above" (Gen 1:7): the Priestly flood is, as David L. Petersen notes, a "return to the pre-creation state".\footnote{Petersen, "The Yahwist on the Flood," 441.} This connection, in turn, creates a sequence of Creation- \textit{Un}creation-Re\textit{c}reation.\footnote{See Wright, "Profane versus Sacrificial Slaughter," 148, for a discussion about how "P's creation story was likely written as a companion to its flood story", and the potential implications this has for the level of interaction that can be assumed between the Priestly author and the J text.} The return to the primordial waters implies a reversal of Creation, or an \textit{Un}creation. Similarly, just as with the first creation when "God began to create heaven and earth [...] with [...] a wind from God sweeping over the water" (Gen 1:1-2), the \textit{Re}creation begins as "God caused a wind to blow across the earth, and the waters subsided" (Gen 8:1). The similarity continues and is expanded by Elohim's command to Noah that he and his family "be fertile, then, and increase; abound on the earth and increase on it" (Gen 9:7), which directly parallels Elohim's action upon creating man and woman: "God blessed them and God said to them, 'Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it" (Gen 1:28). The cosmic significance of the flood is emphasized through the narrative sequence of P's Primeval History. The post-flood "new creation" is a new beginning in the Priestly narrative: the earth itself is cleansed of corruption and Elohim makes a divine covenant (Gen 9:8-10),\footnote{See Robert W. W. Forrest, "Paradise Lost Again: Violence And Obedience In The Flood Narrative," \textit{Journal For The Study Of The Old Testament} 62 (1994): 8, for a discussion on the earth as an active agent in the corruption process in Gen. 6:11-13.} an action that signals the condition of human has "somehow changed radically after the flood".\footnote{Petersen, "The Yahwist on the Flood," 444.}
Petersen's observation emphasizes the Priestly author's attitude toward the flood — that it is an important event within the cultic history of Israel. The points of divergence and the alterations made within the P narrative in order to convey the importance of this episode and to agree ideologically with the larger narrative have fascinating implications within the J flood version.

Where the Priestly flood is a cosmic deluge with significance for the state of humanity, the Yahwistic flood story has a more "earthly" character. The Yahwistic narrative on the whole presents a highly anthropomorphic deity. This characteristic can be seen most clearly in the direct physical intervention of Yahweh after Noah boards the ark when "the LORD shut him in" (Gen 7:16). Yahweh's interaction with Noah's post-flood sacrifice similarly suggests a certain physicality. After exiting the ark, Noah "offered burnt offerings" (Gen 8:20) to Yahweh, who "smelled the pleasing odor" (Gen 8:21). The ability of Yahweh to physically smell the burnt sacrifice would not be possible for the Priestly author's Elohim, which is more transcendent and disembodied in nature. It would follow that a deity who is grounded in an earthly, physical reality would create a flood that is similarly characterized.

The Yahwistic flood is less elaborately described than the Priestly flood, and is also much less dramatic. In the J text, the flood simply "came upon the earth" (Gen 7:10) when "the rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights" (Gen 7:12), and "the waters increased and raised the ark" (Gen 7:17), until "the rain from the sky was held back" (Gen 8:2) and "the waters then receded steadily from the earth" (Gen 8:3). The floodgates, fountains, and general dynamism of the Priestly flood event are absent, as is the cosmic undercurrent. Rather than a dramatic reversal of creation itself, the Yahwistic author sends a rainstorm. Petersen suggests that this is the

166 See Kawashima, "Homo Faber," 498, for an opposing understanding of Yahweh's interaction with the smoke of the burnt sacrifice.
Yahwistic author's recognition of the physical unrealities of the flood story as a whole, though it could also stem from the fact that the J text seems to draw on much older epic traditions throughout the Primeval History of Genesis 1-11. The absence of larger significance extends beyond the Yahwist's decidedly less transcendent flood description to his characterization of Yahweh's own attitude toward and intentions for the flood.

At the beginning of the flood narrative, Yahweh observes "man's wickedness on earth" (Gen 6:5), and because of this he "regretted that He had made man on earth" (Gen 6:6). Consequently, Yahweh decides to "blot out from the earth the men whom [He] created" (Gen 6:7). The flood is thus not only a punishment for humanity's evil, but also a remedy for creation. It is because of humanity's "wickedness" that Yahweh regrets the act of creation. After the flood, Yahweh decides to never again "doom the earth because of man" (Gen 8:21) or "destroy every living being" (Gen 8:21), as he similarly declares in the Priestly version. Unlike the Priestly text, however, Yahweh does not arrive at this decision because the human condition "had somehow changed radically after the flood". Yahweh makes no covenant with Noah, with mankind, nor with all living creatures, but merely "said to Himself" (Gen 8:21) that he would never again send the all-consuming flood. In fact, Yahweh seems to come to this decision only after Noah had "offered burnt offerings on the altar" (Gen 8:20) and Yahweh had "smelled the pleasing odor" (Gen 8:21). As Yahweh decides to never again destroy everything "because of man" (Gen

---

169 Petersen, "The Yahwist on the Flood," 444.
170 See Kawashima, "Homo Faber," 498, for a discussion about how Noah's sacrifice placates Yahweh, and his "spontaneous piety affects a post diluvian balance between divine fury and human foibles".
8:21), he simultaneously acknowledges that, "the devisings of man's mind are evil from his youth" (Gen 8:21).

In this dual decision and acknowledgement, the Yahwistic narrator crafts a Yahweh who admits to a failure of both creation and its remedy, since post-flood humanity is the same as pre-flood humanity. Yahweh decides to never again destroy the earth for the exact same reason that he decided to in the first place. The foreshadowing of humanity's state, as well as Yahweh's ineffectuality, comes to fruition in what Petersen has termed the "Yahwist's poetic guarantee", or the events of Genesis 9:21-25. In this episode, not only is Noah a drunkard (Gen 9:21) and a father who curses his son (Gen 9:25), but his son Ham continues to succumb to "the human propensity for the wrong act". The Yahwistic author undermines our expectations of both Yahweh and humanity in his version of the flood story.

In mapping the J and P versions onto each other, we've discovered that, although these two texts occur redacted together in the Book of Genesis, the Yahwist crafts a very different flood story from that of the Priestly author. Where J creates a more present and human Yahweh, and a flood story that is characterized by a sort of tragic irony, P is driven by a clear and strong ideology, and crafts a beautifully wrought flood story. P centers on Israel's history, in particular Israel's cultic history, making conscious choices in order to create a chronologically cohesive narrative. This differs from J's story, which, considering the earlier comparison with the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, likely stems from a polytheistic, Mesopotamian flood story. Even though J and P are both monotheistic, a close and purely textual examination of these three stories has demonstrated that the shared monotheism and redaction process of the J and P texts does not necessarily

---

173 Ibid.
correlate with a shared conception of Israel's history or cultic ritual. Instead, what we find are
closer parallels in the conception of deities and the importance of cultic ritual between the
Yahwistic flood and the story of Utanapishtim's flood in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. This polytheistic
context for the monotheistic J text allows us to look at a flood story that is geographically and
temporally quite separate from the Book of Genesis, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The story of
Deucalion and Pyrrha is similarly polytheistic to the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and thus presents an
opportunity for a comparison with texts that do not seem immediately related aside from the
same basic shared plotline. Although Ovid's exposure to the Book of Genesis while writing the
*Metamorphoses* is highly unlikely, I am able to compare the J and P sources with Ovid precisely
because of my text-based, synchronic and diachronic, structuralist approach. Normally, Ovid's
flood story, which is most probably derived from a Greek source like most of the
*Metamorphoses*' early mythological stories are, would not be set parallel to the *Epic of
Gilgamesh* or the J and P sources. The perceived similarities between the flood story in the
*Metamorphoses* and those discussed above are enough to warrant a textual comparison, despite
the unlikelihood of Ovid's access to any of the three previously discussed flood texts.

**Comparing the *Metamorphoses*, with the J and P Sources**

Although Ovid's flood narrative shares remarkable similarities with the Genesis versions,
I believe it will be valuable for my later comparisons to examine the particularities of the
*Metamorphoses* version as a separate entity first. On its own, Ovid's rendition of the well-known
Greco-Roman story of Deucalion and Pyrrha is fascinating. As I stated earlier, Ovid makes
several deliberate choices, such as the ordering of various myths, the universality of the flood,
and the inclusion of Themis while excluding Zeus and Hermes, in order to reconfigure mythic
time and create a seamless narrative.\textsuperscript{174} Beyond the use of Themis, the landscape of Ovid's flood myth is rather distinctive. Quite literally, the characterization of the Earth in this episode is notable. It is common for natural phenomena to be personified in Greco-Roman mythological traditions, though the interaction of earthly phenomena and the Earth itself is a unique hallmark of Ovid's flood story. As in most universal flood stories, Ovid describes how the whole earth was submerged in water until "\textit{omnia pontus erant}" ("everything was sea", 1.292). What is notable, however, is that the Earth does not seem to be merely a passive setting for the flood, but a gendered participant in the narrative. From the beginning of the episode, when Jove decides to decimate mankind, Ovid talks about the future Earth as "\textit{mortalibus orbae}" ("bereft of mortals", 1.247).\textsuperscript{175} What is of particular interest in this phrase is that "\textit{orbae}" can simply mean "bereft", but it can also be translated as "childless". The idea that the Earth could be "childless" implies personification and parental role, but it also implies that the Earth is a victim who will suffer due to this destruction. From the connotations of a few words, Ovid conveys to the reader that the Earth is a participant, a character even, in his flood story. The implication that the Earth is "childless" without mortals, however, also foreshadows the Earth's post-flood actions.

After the flood, Deucalion is distraught at the fact that only he and Pyrrha survive, and thus they pray to the goddess Themis for help restoring the human race. Themis answers their prayers with the riddle "\textit{ossaque post tergum magnae iactate parentis}" ("and throw the bones of the great mother behind [your] back", 1.383), a puzzle which Deucalion eventually deciphers as meaning "\textit{magna parens terra est: lapides in corpore terrae / ossa reor dici}" ("the great mother

\textsuperscript{174} Smith, "Bundling Myth, Bungling Myth," 245.
\textsuperscript{175} The maternal nature of the Earth in the \textit{Metamorphoses} is very similar to the characterization of the deities Ishtar and Belet-il in the \textit{Epic of Gilgamesh}. As the onslaught of the flood begins in the \textit{Epic}, "Ishtar screamed like \textit{a woman in childbirth}" (XI.119, emphasis added). Belet-il says that "it was [she herself] who brought [her] people into the world" (XI.125), much like a mother brings a child into the world.
is earth: I think the bones to be said [are] the stones in the body of the earth", 1.393-94). Here, the Earth is firmly characterized as the "great mother", a mother whose children are "mortals" (1.247), and whose body is physically responsible for the rebirth of the human race since "saxa / missa viri manibus faciem traxere virorum, / et de femineo reparata est femina iactu" ("the rocks hurled by the hands of the man derived the shape of men, and from the woman's throw woman is revived", 1.411-13). The Earth is a gendered participant within Ovid's flood story, and an active creative force whose bones form new humans and who grows "cetera animalia" ("the other animals", 1.416) in the "solo ceu matris in alvo" ("soil as if in the womb of a mother", 1.420). The characterization is all the more potent when juxtaposed against the other natural forces that are personified in Ovid's flood story.

All manner of forces, from Notus, the south wind, who "madidis [...] evolat alis" ("flies away with wet wings", 1.264) to the "amnes" ("rivers") (1.276) which "defrenato volvuntur in aequora cursu" ("roll along with an unbridled course on the plain of the sea", 1.282), become active agents in the flood story. They become agents against humanity, in fact. Where the Earth is gendered female, and more importantly characterized as a nurturing mother figure, the other animated forces in the story, all more harshly characterized, work to create the destructive flood. Notus is a being with a "terriblem [...] vultum" ("terrible face") covered with "picea" (pitch black) and "caligine" ("murkiness", 1.265), an already rather menacing aspect made all the more so by virtue of the fact that he flies around bringing rain and thunder. His actions ultimately result in "sternuntur segetes" ("grain fields [which] are strewn", 1.272) and the "deplorata colonis / vota iacent longique perit labor inritus anni" ("lamented vows of the farmers lie in ruins and the useless labor of a long year dies", 1.272-73). Notus is a shadowy, menacing figure that brings destruction and lamentation to humans. The "amnes" ("rivers", 1.276) are even more
menacing and destructive than Notus, however, and are often accompanied by military language and imagery.

Even before the rivers themselves enter the narrative, Jove decides that the rain brought by Notus is not enough and calls upon Neptune to help with "auxiliaribus undis" ("assisting waves", 1.275). The descriptor "auxiliaribus" can simply mean "assisting", but it can also be translated as "auxiliary troops". The image of the rivers as "troops" is an apt one considering they will be committing slaughter in what seems to be the gods' siege of humanity. Throughout the flood narrative, the destructive rivers and floodwaters are characterized in militaristic terms. The waters "ruunt" ("rush on" or "charge", 1.285), and "rapiunt" ("destroy" or "pillage", 1.286) everything from "arbusta" ("groves") to "pecudesque virosque / tectaque" ("sheep and men and houses", 1.286-87). Many of the humans respond as they typically would in battle: one "occupat [...] collem" ("captures a hill", 1.293), seizing the high ground: the connotation of this action deepens the sense of some sort of a battle between the gods (and personified forces of nature) and humanity. Just as in siege warfare, while "maxima pars unda rapitur" ("the largest part is destroyed by the wave", 1.311) in the initial onslaught of the "battle", those whom "unda pepercit" ("the wave spared", 1.311) will eventually all die due to "inopi [...] victu" ("lacking nourishment", 1.312). And just as in battle, the "troops" only relent when they hear the "signo" ("sign", 1.334) of the "cava bucina" ("hollow war trumpet", 1.335) for "receptus" ("retreat", 1.340). The militaristic language and imagery of warfare in the narrative is overwhelming.

---

176 Similarly, the tempest of the flood in the Epic of Gilgamesh is said to have "passed over the people like a battle (XI.113).
177 Though "occupat" can also be translated as "overtakes" or "occupies" or "seizes", all of which have militaristic connotations.
178 "rapitur" can also be translated as "pillaged".
179 Essentially saying: starvation.
180 Generally translated as "sign", but can be translated as "battle standard".
Ovid's utilization of battle connotations and motifs, as well as his particular personifications of nature, work in conjunction to create a very distinctive flood myth. Yet, despite these highly distinctive features, Ovid's tale of Deucalion and Pyrrha is still immediately familiar to the modern reader as a derivative of the flood story. This intersection of difference and familiarity is more potent when mapped against the Genesis flood stories of both J and P.

The Ovidian story of Deucalion and Pyrrha shares material with both the Yahwistic and the Priestly stories of Noah at both the literal and thematic levels. It is extraordinary that when both Genesis 6-9 and Ovid's Deucalion and Pyrrha are read, both are instantly identifiable as "flood myths". In fact, three of the four flood stories examined in this paper follow this same general narrative pattern: a deity observes evil upon earth, sends a flood, spares the life of a worthy human, and dissipates the flood. The flood event itself, the eponymous feature of the story, may initially seem radically different in Ovid's version; there are numerous parallels, however, with both the J and P versions in Genesis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Phase</th>
<th>Ovid's <em>Metamorphoses</em></th>
<th>Yahwist</th>
<th>Priestly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deity directly causes weather phenomena</td>
<td>&quot;Immediately he [Jove] confines the North Wind in the Aeolian caves and whatever winds there were chase away the introduced clouds, and discharges Notus [South Wind]&quot; (1.262-64)</td>
<td>&quot;For in seven days' time I [Yahweh] will make it rain upon the earth, forty days and forty nights&quot; (Gen 7:4)</td>
<td>&quot;In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month...&quot; (Gen 7:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating of flood</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;And on the seventh day the waters of the Flood came upon the earth&quot; (Gen 7:10)</td>
<td>&quot;... on that day All the fountains of the great deep burst apart, / And the floodgates of the sky broke open&quot; (Gen 7:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water from below</td>
<td>&quot;He [Neptune] himself pierced the earth with his trident, but that thing began to tremble and opened up paths of waters with the gesture. Having spread outward, the rivers rush through uncovered plains...&quot; (1.283-85)</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;... on that day All the fountains of the great deep burst apart, / And the floodgates of the sky broke open&quot; (Gen 7:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing flood</td>
<td>&quot;Notus flies away with wet wings [...] a beard heavy with clouds, a wave flows from the gray hairs, clouds settle on his forehead, both feathers and folds drip; and when he pressed the hanging clouds widely with his hand, a crash is made: from here dense clouds are poured from the heaven.&quot; (1.264-69)</td>
<td>&quot;The rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.&quot; (Gen 7:12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising flood levels</td>
<td>&quot;a higher wave covers the roof [of a house ...] and the overwhelmed towers lie hidden below a whirlpool; and now the sea and earth were having no distinction: everything was sea, shores were lacking from any sea&quot; (1.288-92)</td>
<td>&quot;The waters swelled and increased greatly upon the earth&quot; (Gen 7:18)</td>
<td>&quot;When the waters had swelled much more upon the earth, all the highest mountains everywhere under the sky were covered.&quot; (Gen 7:19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceasing of storm and scattering of bad weather</td>
<td>&quot;he [Jupiter] scattered the clouds and the distant rainclouds with the North Wind and he revealed the lands to the sky and the ethers to the lands&quot; (1.328-29) &quot;Now the sea has a shore, the channel captures the full rivers, the rivers subside and the hills are seen to emerge, the ground rises, the places arise from the diminishing waves...&quot; (1.343-45)</td>
<td>&quot;the rain from the sky was held back; the waters then receded steadily from the earth.&quot; (Gen 8:2-3)</td>
<td>&quot;God caused a wind to blow across the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were stopped up&quot; (Gen 8:1-2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3**

Comparison of the Flood Event
On the surface, Ovid's exquisitely visual and descriptive language seems to drive a wide wedge between Deucalion's flood and Noah's floods in Genesis. Just because Ovid's version brims with details and imagery, however, does not mean that his version is all that different from the Biblical flood. In fact, the Ovidian, Yahwistic, and Priestly floods all follow the same general dynamic pattern, which is illustrated above in Figure 3. Jupiter sends rain clouds, just as in the Yahwist's flood, and Jupiter has Neptune release the groundwater, just as in the Priestly flood. After the water rises and covers everything, Jupiter sends a wind over the water as in the Priestly flood, and then Jupiter stops the rain while having Neptune recall the rivers so that the waters decrease as in both the Yahwistic and Priestly floods. While the details initially hide the general similarity between these three versions, it is in the details that the most interesting divergences emerge. For example, in the first row of Figure 3, which demonstrates the transition from the pre-flood world to the onslaught of the flood, there is a small divergence that has large-scale ramifications. In the Yahwistic flood story, Yahweh himself announces the timeframe of seven days in which he will send the flood, whereas in the Ovidian flood story, Jove "protinus" ("immediately", 1.262) takes action to incite the flood. This may seem like a rather insignificant discrepancy at first glance, but it is significant to the larger intention of the respective deities, the role of the worthy survivors, and the post-flood state of each world.

Both Jove and J's Yahweh have passed judgment upon humanity upon observing their evil and corruption, condemning the human race to destruction. Yahweh, "regretted that He had made man on earth" (Gen 6:6) and consequently decided to "blot out from earth the men whom [He] created" (Gen 6:7), as a means of rectifying the failure of his own creation, as discussed above. Nevertheless, despite the "wickedness" (Gen 6:5) of humanity, Noah was "found righteous before [Yahweh] in this generation" (Gen 7:1). In Jove's opinion, on the other hand, all
of humanity was beyond saving, and had so offended him that every single person deserved the "poenas" ("punishment" or "penalty", 1.243) of the floodwaters. J's Yahweh finds one person worthy of salvation, forewarning him that "in seven days' time [he, Yahweh,] will make it rain upon earth, forty days and forty nights, and [he] will blot out from the earth all existence" (Gen 7:4). Meanwhile, Jove has decided to completely discard the current human race, and instead "subolemque priori / dissimilem populo promittit origine mira" ("and he promises a different race than the first people, of marvelous origin", 1.251-52); therefore, he has no need to wait seven days before creating his flood (as there is no one who needs time to prepare), but can instead "protinus" ("immediately", 1.262) sends forth the destruction of the flood.

One small detail about the day of the flood gives important insight into the attitude of the commanding deity in each story. In Yahweh's seven day warning, we see his clemency: Yahweh does not wish to destroy "all existence that [He] created" (Gen 7:4) so cavalierly. Yahweh "had made man" (Gen 6:6), and even though humanity's "wickedness" (Gen 6:5) was great and needed to be expunged, still Yahweh's "heart was saddened" (Gen 6:6). Yahweh's disheartenment at the failure of his own creation is quite a human reaction, as are his efforts to save the one person who "found favor" (Gen 6:8) with him. Noah was "found righteous" (Gen 7:1) by Yahweh, thus Yahweh went to great lengths to preserve Noah's life, as well as the life of "his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives" (Gen 7:7) who were not deemed "righteous" (Gen 7:1) and worthy by Yahweh, yet were granted clemency anyway for Noah's sake. Meanwhile, Jupiter seems much more ambivalent toward the violent and total destruction of humanity. Jupiter grants no clemency and gives no advanced warning because, for Jupiter, there is no reason to be merciful with humanity: humans such as Lycaon have personally and deeply wronged the god.
On top of the personal aspect of humanity's evil, Jupiter has no reason to be sentimental about humanity's destruction because they are not his own creation, as humans are Yahweh's. Some of the other gods do feel "dolori" ("grief") at the "humani generis iactura" ("loss of the human race", 1.246) after Jupiter announces his decision, but this "dolori" is purely selfish, and only stems from the question "quis sit laturus in aras / tura" ("by who may frankincense be born onto the altars?", 1.248-49). While the remaining pantheon is regretful as far as it serves their own self-interest, Jupiter lacks any sentimentality whatsoever: together the entire divine council seems driven by personal indignation and unchecked emotion in the form of "stimulos" ("spurs") and "frementi" ("goads" or "roaring", 1.244). In fact, after sending out Notus, Ovid states that "nec caelo contenta suo est Iovis ira" ("the anger of Jove was not content with his own sky", 1.274), thus calling upon Neptune to increase the ferocity and destruction of the flood, letting his own anger push him to increasingly savage action against humanity. In Yahweh, we see regret for his creations, we see forewarning and clemency, while in Jupiter we see fierce anger informing violent retributive action.

Yahweh, whose "heart was saddened" (Gen 6:6), preemptively saves Noah, a "righteous" (Gen 7:1) man, an action that softens to destruction of "all existence that [He] created" (Gen 7:4). Yahweh actively chooses Noah, and personally sees to his safety when He "shut him in" (Gen 7:16) the shelter of the ark. It is of further credit to Yahweh's clemency in the Yahwistic story that he also spares the lives of Noah's "sons, his wife, and his sons' wives" (Gen 7:7) even though

---

181 Presumably referring to the altars set up in their honor.
182 See Griffin, "Ovid's Universal Flood," 54. Here Griffin claims that, "in the flood episode, the moral character of Ovid's Jupiter can hardly be distinguished from that of Yahweh", which I disagree with. While Jupiter is not the "love-sick, hen-pecked Jupiter of the latter half of book 1" (41) as Griffin earlier claims, Jupiter's decision to send the flood is motivated by anger and retribution for humanity's evil, rather than Yahweh's decision motivated by regret for his failed creation.
they themselves were not "righteous" (Gen 7:1) and did not find "favor with the LORD" (Gen 6:8). Although Jupiter also spares the life of two worthy humans, Deucalion and Pyrrha, he does so retrospectively, more as an outcome of circumstance than a deliberate choice. Deucalion and Pyrrha happen to survive the flood, even when everyone else perished by drowning or starvation, and Jupiter "superesse virum de tot modo milibus unum / et superesse videt de tot modo milibus unam" ("observes only one man from so many thousands to survive and observes only one woman from so many thousands to survive", 1.325-26) who are both "cultores numinis" ("worshipers of divinity", 1.327). Jupiter observes that they don't deserve to die, thus he subdues the storm and floodwaters, but he does not formally grant them clemency.

What is interesting about Jupiter's act of clemency, particularly when set against that of J's Yahweh, is that he saves two humans both of whom he finds worthy. Perhaps it is because both Deucalion and Pyrrha are worth saving that they both have a fairly equal presence in Ovid's narrative. The almost exactly repeated wording of lines 1.325 and 1.326 in the Metamorphoses already characterizes Deucalion and Pyrrha as separate but near parallel figures. There is "unum" ("one man", 1.325) and "unam" ("one woman", 1.326) and "ambo" ("both", 1.327) are equally "innocuos" ("innocent", 1.327). While their status as "innocuos" and "cultores numinis" (1.327) does not make them more favorable to the gods, as Noah was (Gen 6:8), it does still effectually save them from both the flood and the wrath of the commanding deity, similar to Noah.

The descriptor "innocuous" (1.327) is rather interesting, however, as it can mean "innocent", as in "blameless" of the past indecencies that doomed humanity, but it can also be translated as "harmless". If Jupiter deems Deucalion and Pyrrha "harmless" to commit future impieties, then they do not pose the same threat that the rest of the first human race posed, and are thus saved. While Yahweh, too, saves multiple humans from the flood destruction, he only
deems one of them, Noah, "righteous" (Gen 7:1) and worthy. In the original Hebrew, the term used is "ṣādiq", which can be translated as "just", "upright", or even as "persons whose conduct will be checked and found irreproachable, innocent, in the right", and has strong juridical connotations where "righteous" has stronger moral undertones.\(^{183}\) Taking this into consideration, the association of "ṣādiq" (Gen 7:1) solely with Noah implies that all of Noah's "sons, his wife, and his sons' wives" (Gen 7:7) are neither "ṣādiq" (Gen 7:1) before Yahweh, nor necessarily worthy — in fact, they may even fall in with the rest of humanity whose minds are filled with "nothing but evil all the time" (Gen 6:5). This potential comes to fruition immediately after the flood when Noah's son, Ham, transgresses his father (Gen 9:22-25). Yahweh's clemency backfires, and his attempt to rectify the failure of creation itself fails. Jupiter's more calculated clemency is his way of ensuring the fulfillment of his promise for a "subolemque priori / dissimilem populo" ("different race from the first people", 1.251-52), for a humanity that is different, and perhaps better, than the first humanity destroyed in the flood.

In this way, Jupiter's assessment of Deucalion and Pyrrha as "cultores numinis" and "innocuous" (1.327) takes the place of his promise to never repeat the catastrophic flood. While Yahweh's pronouncement in the Yahwistic story is not as formal as Elohim's covenant with Noah "and with every living thing" (Gen 9:10) in the Priestly story, Yahweh still clearly and meaningfully states that "never again will [He] doom the earth because of man [...] nor will [He] ever again destroy every living being" (Gen 8:21). Though the formality of the decision differs between the J and P versions, in both Biblical narratives there is a promise from the deity that this all-consuming punishment will not be sent again. There is no such decision or pronouncement on the part of Jupiter or the rest of the divine council of gods in the Ovidian

story. There is no real need for such an official declaration, however, because Jupiter has already observed that the two first-race human survivors are not only "cultores numinis" (1.327), and thus pious, but also "innocuos" (1.327), and thus harmless to repeat the transgressions and evils that doomed the rest of their race. In this assessment, Jupiter has all the assurance he needs that his flood punishment was successful, and that there will indeed be a new and different race as he promised (1.251-52). Yahweh must make this decision in the Yahwistic story because he must also acknowledge that his remedy for creation was unsuccessful, and that "the devisings of man's mind are evil from his youth" (Gen 8:21). The state of humanity in the post-flood Yahwistic world is much the same, the potential for wickedness and corruption is still present; Yahweh must be satisfied with the pleasing smell of "burnt offerings on the altar" (Gen 8:20) made by Noah.

In this way, Jupiter's post-flood attitude, particularly its connection to his pre-flood promise for a new and different race (1.251-52) more closely parallels the Priestly flood story. In both the Ovidian and Priestly flood stories, after the flood has subsided, the worthy survivors are tasked with repopulating the Earth. While the methods with which the various survivors fulfill that task differ greatly, the connection between each repopulation method and its respective creation story is remarkable. In the P text, Noah and his sons are told by Elohim to "be fertile and increase, and fill the earth" (Gen 9:1), which is a precise reiteration of Elohim's command to the first man and woman created to "be fertile and increase, and fill the earth" (Gen 1:28). Similarly, after the flood in Ovid's text, Themis' riddle (1.383) ultimately leads Deucalion and Pyrrha to throw "lapides" ("stones", 1.393) behind them which become new men and women (1.412-13). Just as humans are created again from the earthly material of "lapides", when first created

\[\text{i.e. the } "ossa [...] magna [...] parentis" \text{ or the } "\text{bones of the great mother}" \text{ in 1.383}\]
humans "tellus / induit ignotas hominum conversa figuras" ("the earth having been changed assumed the unknown figures of humans", 1.88-89), humans were literally formed from the earth during first creation, then once more after the flood.

The concept of the post-flood world as a second creation, or a Recreation, has a strong presence in both the Ovidian and Priestly accounts. The idea of a second creation after the flood naturally implies that the destruction of the flood itself is a reversal of creation, or an Uncreation. The imagery of the Priestly flood event when "all the fountains of the great deep burst apart, / and the floodgates of the sky broke open" (Gen 7:11), is reflective of the imagery of first Creation. The mingling of the flood and storm waters seems to be a return to the primordial waters before "the water which was below" was separated "from the water which was above" (Gen 1:7). The imagery in the Ovidian flood story similarly signals a return to a pre-creation state. In describing the effect of the flood, Ovid states "mare et tellus nullum discrimen habebant: / omnia pontus erant, deerant quoque litora ponto" ("the sea and the earth were having no distinction: everything was sea, shores were lacking from any sea", 1.291-92), which alludes to the pre-creation description of matter when "nec bracchia longo / margine terrarum porrexerat Amphitrite" ("Amphitrite had not [yet] extended her arms on the long edge of the lands", 1.13-14). The imagery utilized in the Ovidian and Priestly flood stories purposefully crafts a sequence of Creation-Uncreation-Recreation.

The parallel does not extend beyond this pattern, however, as the flood event and new creation ultimately result in a divine covenant for the Priestly author, whereas Ovid's recreation

---

185 Amphitrite is a sea goddess and the wife of Neptune, and was often used as a metonym for the ocean. So her arms that stretched along the edge of the land was the shore, an image that directly hearkens to the imagery of the flood effects.
results in the "breaking of the link between human beings and the gods".\textsuperscript{186} This "irreparable"\textsuperscript{187} break occurs precisely because of the new humans, the "\textit{subolemque priori dissimilem populo}" ("race different from the first people", 1.251-52), who are formed by Deucalion and Pyrrha from "\textit{saxa}" ("rocks", 1.411), and the simultaneous loss of any divinity contained within humans.\textsuperscript{188} The tone of this loss does not so much align with covenant of the Priestly account.\textsuperscript{189}

Nevertheless, it is fascinating to see both P and Ovid imposing this same sequential pattern on the story of the creation and of the flood. Though P and Ovid may themselves be unrelated, the obvious convergence of their narrative functions suggests that their approach to crafting these stories was similar. As discussed, the Priestly author is ideologically motivated, and is trying to create a chronologically cohesive history of Israel's cult. This attempt at chronology and cohesion, however, may extend beyond the timeline of Israel's cultic development, into the patterning of major events in the Primeval History. If this is so, then it closely parallels Ovid's authorial intent in coalescing various myths into a single, continuous historical timeline — even rearranging, adding, or altering the circumstances of mythological events in order to accomplish the cohesion of the epic poem as a whole.

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

In this chapter I have looked at various versions of the flood story, as they have appeared in Liber I of the \textit{Metamorphoses}, the \textit{Epic of Gilgamesh}, and both the J and P sources from the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{186} Griffin, "Ovid's Universal Flood," 47.
\item \textsuperscript{187} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{188} In his account of the creation of humankind, Ovid suggests that the creator "\textit{hunc divino semine fecit}" ("he made this [humans] from the divine seed", 1.78).
\item \textsuperscript{189} Potentially aligns more with Kawashima's view on J's version: the flood is the point when mortality is "explicitly decreed as the fate of all of humanity". See Kawashima, \textit{Homo Faber}," 493.
\end{itemize}
Book of Genesis. My textually based comparative approach allowed me to look at this group of texts despite the fact that they span a wide, and non-tangential cultural, geographical, and temporal space. These four flood narratives would normally not all be set within the same sphere of comparison because of this distance. I was able, however, to look at them as a collection by virtue of the remarkable similarities in these four flood narratives. Indeed, I was only able to include Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in my analysis because my text-focused approach (or my adherence to a "rigid scholarly model of textual transmission"\(^{190}\)) allowed me to compare texts from cultures with no historical evidence of contact. Through a series of modified Levi-Straussian tables, I have examined the narrative functions of these texts parallel to each other, observing the various convergences, inversion, absences, and other manipulations imposed upon these component narrative elements. Each version is recognizable as a derivation of the basic flood narrative, which I've outlined in Figure 1, but each differentiates itself through ideological and cultural variations.

By adapting a structuralist mode of comparative mythology as a means of drawing out motivic similarities I have been able to explore the elements shared by the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the J source, *and the Metamorphoses* and both the J and P texts, despite the gap between monotheism and polytheism, and the geographic-cultural gap. The unexpectedly strong correlation demonstrated between the J source and the *Epic of Gilgamesh* in terms of their conception of divine beings, the importance of cultic ritual, and their perceptions of divine-mortal relationships, placed the Yahwistic flood into a Near Eastern context, providing the polytheistic associations for a monotheistic text necessary for an Ovidian comparison. It was the deliberate alterations, expansions, and omissions in the P text, which not only suggest the Priestly author's interaction with the J text, but also provide the basis for a fascinating

\(^{190}\) López-Ruiz, *When the Gods Were Born*, 5, emphasis original.
comparison with the Ovidian flood. While many aspects of Ovid's story of Deucalion and Pyrrha do seem to draw upon local Grecian flood traditions, my comparison with the P source has illuminated the parallel sequential patterning in the flood and creation stories in both texts. The fact that both of these seemingly unrelated texts impose the pattern of creation, destruction, and recreation within their respective creation and flood accounts suggests that there was a similar, albeit coincidental, authorial process at work. The Priestly author and Ovid both actively altered elements of existing stories in order to craft cohesive, continuous narratives.

Although they were driven by different ideological purposes, both authors made conscious decisions and adaptations of a well-known flood story in an effort to create cohesion, which resulted in this overlapping pattern. This motivic convergence, in particular, complicates the discussion of textual transmission through cultural contact, as presented by López-Ruiz. Two authors, P and Ovid, separated by a vast geographical, temporal, and cultural distance, both independently adapted a common, pre-existing myth type, that of the flood event. This pattern, and the potential motivation behind it, can be examined by means of a textually focused comparative approach, whereas the reverse approach, of using potential cultural contact points as a source for literary comparison, utilized by López-Ruiz, would not have arrived at this observation and assessment. In turn, the overlaps, both expected and unexpected, begin to suggest starting points for my later investigation into the historicity of contact between the various cultures that created these myths.
CHAPTER 3: CREATION

INTRODUCTION

Creation stories, or cosmogonies, are submerged within the context of their respective cultures. The way a specific culture understands their origins, and the origins of the universe, is tightly bound up in the way that a culture views itself and understands the world around it. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, creation myths can be informed by particular ideologies, offer up culturally specific etiologies, and reflect societal understandings of gender and religion. As the ultimate etiology, cosmogonies and creation narratives provide an ideal space for presenting and legitimating ideologies as essentially irrefutable. Yet despite the close-knit relationship between a culture and its creation myth, there are numerous and varied narrative functions that run throughout creation stories that are separated by a wide cultural, geographical, and temporal gulf. These motivic and thematic similarities are eye catching. They tempt the reader to follow the path laid out by William Burkert and Carolina López-Ruiz into the realm of cultural contact models, and to use the textual comparisons as evidence of interaction between ancient Babylonian and Israelite peoples, or between the Near East and the Classical world of Greece and Rome. This line of thinking is particularly alluring when examining creation stories, and the conceptions that inform those stories, as they speak to the way that a culture understands and processes existence itself: the draw to connect and compare the way societies understand existence is magnetic, but can easily devolve into reductive universalism. As Wendy Doniger reminds the comparativist, myths that appear to be the same, "are not really 'the same' when they are transposed from one cultural context to another".  

---

191 Doniger, *The Implied Spider*, 42.
In this chapter, I will continue to employ the modified Levi-Straussean tabular method that I used in the previous chapters in order to examine these widespread creations myths from a purely textual vantage point as opposed to operating under any hypothetical model of cross-cultural contact. I will map out the narrative functions that run throughout and across creation myths from ancient Near Eastern and Classical Mediterranean cultures, pulling out the most compelling narrative functions to cross-examine in depth in the body of the chapter. The creation stories that I have chosen to analyze are found in the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, the Priestly account in Genesis 1-2:4a, in the Biblical Psalms 89 and 104, and in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In studying the structure of each creation account, a structural pattern emerges that appears constant across the Ovidian, Babylonian, and Priestly creation stories, a formula composed of shared narrative functions. This framework of narrative functions appears to take its most epic and mythic tone in the *Enuma Elish*, in the way the creator god is characterized as a hyper-masculine warrior, the conception of the primordial universe as a chaotic and vengeful female force, and the creation of the cosmos and humanity rooted in violence and warfare. Strikingly, Genesis 1-2:4a follows the same basic narrative trajectory as the *Enuma Elish*'s creation story, but either inverts or erases these narrative functions. Whereas Marduk is a divine warrior who creates the world by sheer force and power, Elohim creates the universe effortlessly through mere speech and intent. The characterizations and relationship between the chaos and creator deities in the *Enuma Elish* are gendered, and serve the larger purpose of the epic to glorify Marduk, and justify his rise to power. The Priestly creation is able to fit the same narrative framework as the Babylonian creation myth by inverting the characterization of the primordial waters, neutralizing any genuine threat to Elohim's powers. In doing this, P fits the creation framework to his own religious and ideological mores.
Ovid's *Metamorphoses* contains a creation story that also follows the larger frame of narrative functions that the *Enuma Elish* and Priestly accounts use. Just as the Priestly writer renegotiated the terms of each narrative function evident in the *Enuma Elish* in order to fit his own set of ideologies, Ovid, too, adapts the mythological concepts of Hesiod's *Theogony* and interweaves them with Lucretian atomistic language. In synthesizing these two polarized understandings of the natural world, Ovid is able to critique the hyper naturalist Lucretian ideologies. At the same time Ovid refutes Lucretius' assertion that the gods and fate have no powers of intervention in physical reality, he is also able to position himself and his poem within a larger Greco-Roman mythico-poetic tradition, through his reference to Hesiod and adaption of epic poetic features.

Each creation myth examined in this chapter is mired in its own individual cultural context, yet through the textually focused, tabular approach to analysis, larger narrative patterns emerge that invite closer examination. This, in turn, allows the comparativist to see the nuanced convergences, divergences, inversions, negations, and erasures of every narrative function, creating a map of each text's specific use of each narrative function. The observed narrative patterns, however, consist of more than recurring themes, motifs, and functions. Rather, each text contains a meaningful structural pattern, which is not only constructed from, but also informed and influenced by each author's pointed manipulation of the narrative functions at hand. Through a structuralist-based, tabular approach, each text can be broken down into its component parts, and compared at a functional level to understand how each element works both in relation to its own narrative and to other similar narratives.
Priestly "P" Creation Story

The first of the two creation stories within the Biblical Book of Genesis is the Priestly account, which can be found in Genesis 1-2:4a. P conceives the primordial state of the universe as "unformed and void" (Genesis 1:2), but not empty — as P understands the pre-creation state of the universe, there was a mass of water ("tehom" in Hebrew, Gen 1:2) and darkness that existed. The act of creation proceeds from this state and is propelled purely by Elohim's vocal command. Each of the six days of creation are framed by the phrase "God said, 'Let there be [insert element of creation here]'" and "And it was so". Elohim's voice alone is a powerful creative force. His creative actions are two-fold: Elohim both creates features from nothing, and separates opposite elements from one another to further define the created world. For example, on the first day, "God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Gen 1:3), and after the light had been created from nothing, "God separated the light from the darkness" (Gen 1:4), a darkness which existed before creation first began. Upon closer inspection, however, a distinct pattern emerges in the order and structure of Elohim's creative actions. The six days of creation can be divided into two parallel sets of three days as visualized in Figure 1.192

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>1 light</th>
<th>2 (firmament separating) sea and heaven</th>
<th>3 dry land and seed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 luminaries</td>
<td>5 birds and fish; sea swarers (creatures of heaven &amp; sea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1
Visualizing the Structural Pattern of the Priestly Creation193

193 Figure taken from Fishbane, "Genesis 1:1-2:4a/ The Creation," 10.
It is apparent in Figure 1 that the first set of days (Days 1-3) Elohim creates and differentiates features of creation in broad categories (i.e., light and dark, dry land and sea, etc.). During the second set of days (Days 4-6) Elohim differentiates further within each of these general categories, adding complexities on the corresponding day. For example, on the second day of creation Elohim separates the waters above from the waters below, creating the sky and the earthly waters, then on the fifth day (which parallels the second day) Elohim creates winged creatures (or sky animals) and water creatures.

The repetitive and precisely regimented structure illustrated here aligns with P's widely recognized stylistic preference for specific details, a preference that can be seen in P's use of exact dates, ages, and times in the Priestly flood account. P's use of the title Elohim, rather than the proper name of Yahweh, is evident in the Priestly creation account. By imbuing Elohim's divine speech with the power to create features from nothing, P's generally more distant and omnipotent characterization of Elohim is also apparent, particularly when compared to the highly anthropomorphic, physically embodied, and non-omniscient Yahweh of J's creation in Genesis 2:4b-3.\textsuperscript{194} The P source, which likely dates to around the 6\textsuperscript{th} century BCE,\textsuperscript{195} is also known for its preoccupation with the cultic and priestly elements of Israelite history and religion. The cultic elements of the Priestly creation can be found in the events of the seventh day, when Elohim

\textsuperscript{194} David L. Petersen, "The Yahwist on the Flood", \textit{Vetus Testamentum} 26, no. 4 (1976): 438. It is also important to note that J treats creation in quite a different manner than P. The Yahwistic creation story is comprised of the well-known story of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman. J details their creation, and the nature of their existence in Eden before narrating their expulsion from the Garden. See Genesis 2:4b-3.
\textsuperscript{195} Mark Smith, \textit{The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1} (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 41.
stopped working, rested, and "declared it holy" (Gen 2:3), which several scholars, such as Mark G. Brett, Arvid Kapelrud, and Michael Fishbane identify as the "Sabbath".\footnote{See Michael Fishbane, "Genesis 1:1-2:4a/The Creation," 9. See also Arvid S. Kapelrud, "The Mythological Features in Genesis Chapter I and the Author's Intentions," \textit{Vetus Testamentum} 24, no. 2 (1974): 179. See also Mark G. Brett, "Motives and Intentions in Genesis I," \textit{The Journal of Theological Studies} 42, no. 1 (1991): 6.}

Although the text does not explicitly name this day as the Sabbath, nor prescribe its observance, the shared characteristics between the seventh day and the Sabbath create a space for its etiology later in P's timeline of Israel's cultic history. Its inclusion may also be related to P's 6th century BCE dating, which also saw the Israelites' period of Exile.\footnote{Mark Smith, \textit{The Priestly Vision}, 21.} Kapelrud notes that that the Sabbath may have become increasingly important to the ancient Israelites during the period of exile "to mark themselves out as a special religious and national group",\footnote{Kapelrud, "The Mythological Features, 179.} and that the stresses of the state of exile made it seem necessary "to take care of all ancient traditions", such as the Sabbath, "and to carry them further to the coming generations".\footnote{Ibid., 180.} The inclusion of this priestly ideology within the framework of creation, however, interacts with the looming presence of the numerous creation stories already in existence. Kapelrud emphasizes the "strong rules in the ancient world" by which structuring framework "a creation story had to be written",\footnote{Ibid., 182.} particularly for those readers living within the Babylonian world, a society that had its own creation stories, such as the \textit{Enuma Elish}, which contain noted parallels with the Priestly creation account on both a structural and motivic level.
The 'Enuma Elish' Creation Story

The most well known Mesopotamian creation myth is in the *Enuma Elish*,[^201] which is often simply referred to as the Babylonian "Epic of Creation". The state of the primordial universe is described as the "skies above were not yet named / nor the earth below pronounced by name".[^202] While the Priestly primordial universe contains water and darkness and is occupied by God, the primordial Babylonian universe is occupied by two water deities, Apsu (the male) and Tiamat (the female). While these gods do exercise creative powers, they do not create the cosmos, but instead begin a dynasty of gods by intermingling their waters. The generations of gods come into conflict with their progenitors, resulting in the murder of Apsu. The death of her mate spurs Tiamat to take vengeance upon her divine children. Marduk, the storm god, fights Tiamat and kills her, splitting her into two pieces and forming the cosmos from her corpse. The author maps out each feature of the cosmos in terms of Tiamat's dismembered anatomy, with the first half of her body forming the heavens and all it holds, and the second half forming the earth and everything on it. He then establishes religion and the city of Babylon, and then creates humans from the blood and bone of Tiamat's general, Kingu, for the purpose of relieving the gods of their labors.

The Babylonian "Epic of Creation" as we have it today exists in seven tablets. Several potential dates for the epic's written composition have been posited by scholars, from as early as the reign of Summula-el (1936-1901 BCE), to the reign of Hammurabi (1848-1806 BCE), to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (1125-1104 BCE) making it one of the older texts examined in this

[^201]: I'm using the Stephanie Dalley translation and all citations will be tablet and page numbers, as line numbers are not provided.
[^202]: Tablet 1, page 233.
While the *Enuma Elish* does recount a cosmological story, its focus is on the birth of the gods and Marduk's rise to power. The two primordial water deities who occupy the pre-creation universe create a new generation of gods from their intermingling waters. This generation of gods culminates in Marduk, who becomes the king of the gods during this story by defeating Tiamat, one of the primordial water deities. The build up to, and the climax of, the final celestial battle is the focus of the story. The actual "creation" does not even occupy an entire tablet of the seven that comprise the entire epic — in fact, the creation of the cosmos from Tiamat's corpse appears to be a vehicle for Marduk to not only fully disarm and dishonor his opponent, but also as a way to increase his glory and supremacy over the other Babylonian gods, who exalt him for his creative acts. The *Enuma Elish*’s focus on Marduk's exploits seems to stem from the fact that Marduk was the patron god of the city of Babylon, suggesting the text's main goal is an etiology of Marduk's relationship to Babylon, as well as Marduk's supremacy over the rest of the pantheon. The act of creation is a subordinate act that solidifies and glorifies Marduk's status as the chief god.

**Creation in the Biblical Psalms**

While creation motifs, allusions, and narratives appear in numerous psalms, Pss 89 and 104 offer particularly fascinating and fruitful material for comparison. The creation elements of Psalm 89 only compromise part of the entire psalm, roughly occupying verses 6-15 of the total 53 verses. Psalm 89 is not actually a creation account in the strictest sense, and does not contain

---


a nearly as full and complex account as the other texts examined in this chapter, but rather includes creation allusions and motifs to serve a larger purpose. Featuring a tripartite composition, the first section, recognized as a hymn, contains the creation elements.\textsuperscript{206} The initial hymn section praises Elohim's "steadfast Love", "faithfulness" (Ps 89:2), and "might" (Ps 89:14). The psalmist who wrote Psalm 89, allegedly "Ethan the Ezrahite" (Ps 89:1), praises Elohim's traits by recounting His creative acts. Frank-Lothar Hossfel and Erich Zenger assert, however, that the creation narrative elements in this psalm are allegorical for Elohim's historical deeds: the primeval chaos monster "Rahab" (Ps 89:11) is a metaphor for Egypt, while the enemies that God scattered (Ps 89:11) stand in for the Egyptians killed in the Red Sea.\textsuperscript{207}

Allegorical or not, the creation allusions within Psalm 89 best fit under the divine power model of creation that Mark Smith outlines. While Psalm 89 does not follow the outline to the letter, the way creation in the \textit{Enuma Elish} does, it still contains the elements of "God's powerful victory over cosmic enemies" in the form of "Rahab" (Ps 89:11),\textsuperscript{208} and emphasizes His power as a key element of the divine in verses 9, 11, and 14.\textsuperscript{209} The use of the divine power model of creation becomes more interesting in the context of the rest of the psalm. The second of the tripartite psalm consists of divine discourse outlining the establishment of the Davidic dynasty and the formation of a covenant, the fall of which is the focus of the entire psalm. In verse 4, David is named "My chosen one" and "My servant" by Elohim's own divine voice, titles that are


\textsuperscript{208} Mark Smith, The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 12.

\textsuperscript{209} Mark Smith, The Priestly Vision, 13.
honorific and establish David as Elohim's proxy on earth. The concept of a human king acting as Elohim's earthly intermediary is a facet of Smith's divine power creation model that is unique to Israelite literature.\textsuperscript{210} This idea of king David acting as Elohim's proxy is supported by the fact that Elohim "set [David's] hand upon the sea" (Ps 89:26), with Elohim having only just been exalted as one who "rule[s] the swelling of the sea" (Ps 89:10). It is interesting that the psalmist should demonstrate this connection so emphatically in the first two sections, as the third section consists of a lament, a petition to Elohim, and what amounts to an \textit{accusation} of Elohim for having "rejected, spurned, and become enraged at [His] anointed" who "repudiated the covenant with [His] servant" (Ps 89:39-40). Psalm 89 opens by praising Elohim's many glorious and powerful characteristics, only to disparage and beseech Him: the larger trajectory of the psalm and its inherent tensions between exaltation and critique creates a fascinating context for the creation narrative allusions.

In its tone, trajectory, and creation model Psalm 104 is a vastly different text from Psalm 89. Unlike the small proportion of Psalm 89 occupied by creation allusions, Psalm 104 consists almost entirely of creation elements, framed by the psalmist's praise for Elohim. After the initial exaltation of Elohim's glory, the psalm reads like a catalog of Elohim's creation, and a reflection on the consequences of those creations. Hossfeld and Zenger identify the first section, beginning with the structural establishment of the universe, moving through the provision of water, the progress of time, and an examination of the sea, as "the earth as the dwelling of life".\textsuperscript{211} Unlike Psalm 89, "the struggle with chaos is only a distant echo" since Leviathan, traditionally known as

\textsuperscript{210} Mark Smith, \textit{The Priestly Vision}, 13.
a fierce watery chaos monster, has been reduced to Elohim's plaything.⁰²¹² Here creation is rather orderly, rhythmic, and peaceful. This fits nicely with Smith's divine wisdom creation model. In this model the universe is made by a "divine craftsman", ²¹³ which is evident in the description of Elohim spreading "the heavens like a tent cloth" (Ps 104:2), and putting its "rafters" (Ps 104:3) in the water. The second section is more of a reflection, in the understanding of Hossfeld and Zenger, on the "dependence of the creatures on the creator".⁰²¹⁴ stressing not only the dependence of creation on Elohim, but also Elohim's ultimate power over the fate of all creation. This recognition of and reflection on the fragility of creation in the face of Elohim's omnipotence is one of many ways that the psalmist continually praises Elohim throughout the entirety of the psalm. This ongoing praise is a stark contrast from the lamentation at the end of Psalm 89.

The Ovidian Creation in the 'Metamorphoses'

As mentioned previously, the Metamorphoses was written in the Augustan era, likely around 8 CE, at the beginning of what we now call the Roman Empire, and incorporates Greek and Roman myths into a single, continuous narrative timeline. The creation of the cosmos occurs, quite suitably, within the first few lines of Liber I of the poem, leading into the four Metallic ages (1.89-150), culminating in Lycaon's betrayal (1.177-243) and the flood of Deucalion and Pyrrha (1.274-437). Though Ovid's cosmology incorporates Greek myth by clearly leaning on Hesiod's Theogony, even employing the same term to describe the primordial state of the universe, "Chaos", Ovid's conception of primordial Chaos diverges sharply from that

of Hesiod. Where Hesiod understands Chaos as "the Abyss" (*Theogony* line 116),\(^{215}\) a term which implies utter emptiness, Ovid's "Chaos" is "*rudis indigestaque moles*" ("a rough and disordered mass", 1.7) that holds all "*discordia semina rerum*" ("the warring seeds of the universe", 1.9) that are "*congesta*" ("heaped up", 1.8). Where Hesiod sees the primordial state as empty, Ovid sees it as completely full, simply undifferentiated. It is because of this divergent conception of primordial Chaos that Ovid is able to incorporate the theme of metamorphosis from the very beginning of the cosmos. Whereas in the *Theogony*, divinities simply come into being from nothing, Ovid tells us that some "*deus et melior [...] natura*" ("god and better nature", 1.21) came along and "*litem [...] diremit*" ("divided the quarrel", 1.21), thus creating the cosmos by untangling the mass. The recognizable cosmos was created by the reconfiguration of existing elements in Ovid's creation account, fitting nicely with the interconnecting theme of metamorphosis that ties the poem together.

Interestingly, Ovid does not only draw upon his mythic Greek predecessors within his creation account, but also his scientific-philosophical predecessors. Many scholars have recognized the intertextuality between Ovid's creation account and Lucretius' influential work *De Rerum Natura*.\(^ {216}\) Ovid's description of the separation of the elements based on their respective densities, as well as his use of specific Lucretian atomistic terminology "*semina rerum*" ("seeds of the universe", 1.9), display Ovid's awareness of and interaction with the scientific-philosophy of Lucretius. This highly technical aspect of Ovid's creation, however, stands out against his


more poetic aspects, such as the use of the Titans as metonyms for celestial bodies (1.10-14).

The tension between the Lucretian naturalism and the poetic supernaturalism is very prominent in Ovid's account of humanity's creation. Ovid hedges his account of humanity's creation, presenting two alternatives — one being the creation of humans from "divino semine [... ] rerum" ("the divine seed of the universe", 1.78-79) by the "opifex" ("workman", 1.79); the other being the creation of humans by Prometheus from "tellus [...] mixtam pluvialibus undis" ("earth having been mixed with rainy waves", 1.80-82). While one account sees humanity as a product of Lucretian atomism, another sees humanity's creation as the product of the supernatural and the mythological. This moment of human creation, moreover, is just the first within a series in which the races of humanity arise throughout the primeval history — beginning with the races of the Metallic ages, and ending with the stone-humans created by Deucalion and Pyrrha after the flood, the final race to be created.

**Comparison and Analysis of the Various Creation Stories**

In the following table, I have identified the key narrative phases or functions, each of which appears in several, if not all, of the creation accounts I am examining in this chapter. A narrative function is here defined as a fundamental component of a specific type of myth, in this case the creation myth. What I am calling a narrative function Lévi-Strauss termed a "mytheme", which is analogous to the linguistic "phoneme", a reference to the Saussurean structural linguistics that are foundational to his analytical method. For each general narrative function that I have identified, I have briefly described the nature of each function within its respective text. While the narrative functions may not appear in the same order in each text, this tabular presentation allows for the examination of each component part of these creation myths: how
they relate across different creation texts, as well as how they might function similarly or differently within their respective stories is much more easily determined when broken down so schematically.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Function</th>
<th>Enuma Elish</th>
<th>Psalm 89:6-15</th>
<th>Psalm 104</th>
<th>Genesis 1-2:4</th>
<th>Metamorphoses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primordial State</strong></td>
<td>Tiamat and Apsu, primordial water god and goddess</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Darkness and undifferentiated mass of water</td>
<td>Chaos. All matter jumbled together into one heap. Opposite elements fighting against each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primordial Being/ Antagonist</strong></td>
<td>Tiamat, primordial water goddess, female, chaotic and frenzied, monstrous, surrounded by demon army, mother of all gods, vengeful, defeated only by Marduk</td>
<td>Rahab, primeval being, a &quot;dragon&quot; (Isa 51:9), defeated by God</td>
<td>No true antagonist. Primordial waters are fearful, flee, allow themselves to be bound. Leviathan normally known as an &quot;elusive&quot; or &quot;twisting&quot; serpent or sea dragon (Is 27:1) (Job 41), but here is a pet to play with.</td>
<td>No antagonist or being before Elohim creates.</td>
<td>No antagonist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creator God/ Hero?</strong></td>
<td>Marduk, a younger god, becomes chief god, defeats Tiamat, Sky/Storm God, Divine Warrior.</td>
<td>Chief god of divine assembly, faithful, dreaded, mighty</td>
<td>Clothed in glory, architect of cosmos, commands natural forces, sky/storm god, wise, singular, all-powerful</td>
<td>Priestly Elohim, singular, wise</td>
<td>Anonymous god, the craftsman of the universe, who creates a better world. Works with a better nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primordial Struggle</strong></td>
<td>Battle between Tiamat and Marduk</td>
<td>Rahab defeated; Enemies scattered</td>
<td>Inversion: The waters &quot;flee&quot; Elohim, and Leviathan is created as a pet</td>
<td>Inversion: <em>tehom</em> receptive to creation; sea monsters created with other sea creatures and are &quot;good&quot;</td>
<td>The opposing elements are described in a legal dispute. The state of Chaos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motive for Creation</strong></td>
<td>Marduk killed Tiamat and separates her body (primordial waters)</td>
<td>Still the seas, scatter enemies, increase glory and might, and rule over/possess creation</td>
<td>To create something wise, to create a legacy of glory, to rule absolutely over it all</td>
<td>To separate opposites, to differentiate</td>
<td>To create a better nature, to create harmony and peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material of Creation</strong></td>
<td>Tiamat's corpse</td>
<td>Elohim's command and wisdom</td>
<td><em>tehom</em>, darkness, and Elohim's words/command</td>
<td>All matter is preexisting, just mixed together.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Force of Creation</strong></td>
<td>Marduk's brute force (cuts, positions, secures)</td>
<td>Elohim's might</td>
<td>Elohim's wisdom</td>
<td>The craftsman God's intercession. The natural physical properties of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation from Nothing?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Partially yes.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation as Creation?</td>
<td>Dismemberment of Tiamat's corpse</td>
<td>Not explicitly, but creation described in pairs/opposites</td>
<td>In a way, such as the waters fleeing and revealing mountains and valleys</td>
<td>Partially yes. Separate opposites from each other to create complexity in the cosmos.</td>
<td>Yes. Separate mass into component parts. The component parts naturally arrange themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of Creation</td>
<td>Divine Power. Top to bottom (The sky and heavens, then the earth, then earthly waters). Anthropomorphic, built with and following her body parts.</td>
<td>Above and Below (heaven and earth, north and south)</td>
<td>Architectural, building cosmos like building a structure. Dynamic, water flowing through as connective. Purposeful, with the elements interwoven into a system.</td>
<td>Divine Wisdom and Divine Presence. Pyramid structure and two-fold structures of 6 days of creation.</td>
<td>Move from Chaos to Order/Logic. Based on separating Empedocles' 4 basic elements, and differentiating further from there (i.e. homogeneity to complexity/differentiation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of Humanity</td>
<td>From blood of traitorous god, to do the gods' labor</td>
<td>Creation of Davidic dynasty.</td>
<td>Creation is the material of humanity's labor, their sustenance; the fragility of their existence at Elohim's whim emphasized</td>
<td>Last of creation. On 6th day with other land animals. In the image of Elohim. Given special status but still a part of creation.</td>
<td>Created last. Considered animals, but more sacred, more intelligent, and rulers of other animals. Either made of divine seed, or molded from mud by Prometheus. Given upright faces to look to heavens and stars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine Relationship to Creation</td>
<td>Gods in awe of creation. Marduk exalted for creation. Gods liberated of work, and worshipped because of creation.</td>
<td>Elohim owns creation. Creation itself praises Elohim. Elohim is praised by other divine beings because of creation.</td>
<td>All of creation at the complete mercy of Elohim. Creation is Elohim's glory and wisdom manifest.</td>
<td>All of creation is dependent upon Elohim.</td>
<td>Craftsman God fades into oblivion. The later Olympian Gods have many interactions with humans, but the Olympians are part of creation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2**

Mapping Narrative Functions Across Creation Stories
Despite the wide cultural, temporal, and geographical gulf that spans each of these texts, the schematic visualization of each creation account's narrative functions allows the reader to observe each text at a structural and motivic level. From this highly abstracted schema, the relational web woven diachronically between each instantiation of a narrative function becomes evident. To elaborate, it is evident from Figure 2 that there is always a single god working to create the cosmos, and that god is consistently male (both explicitly and implicitly), throughout the creation myths under examination. The narrative functions of the primordial beings and primordial struggle, the act of separation as creation and the force propelling creation, the resulting structure of creation, and the creation of humanity are all similarly compelling. The way each text either maintains, inverts, or disregards these particular narrative functions does not appear to be random, however, but driven by external ideological structural patterning, which will be the focus of the rest of this chapter.

**Narrative Function: The Conception of the Primordial State**

The conception of the primordial state of the universe is an important aspect of any creation account because it can affect the manner in which creation is enacted, it can reveal the material that was used to create the cosmos, and it can reflect the relationship the creator god has with his creation. In a vacuum, one might logically assume that prior to the creation of the universe there existed nothing, and creation occurred *ex nihilo*, which is how the ancient Greek poet Hesiod understood the pre-creation cosmos in the *Theogony*. For Hesiod, before the universe there was only "Chaos" (Hesiod, line 116),\(^{217}\) or "Χάος", which can be understood as

---

\(^{217}\) Hesiod, *Theogony*, trans. Stanley Lombardo, 64.
"infinite space", as "infinite darkness", and also as "any vast gulf or chasm". This characterization of "Chaos" connotes a vast lack, an infinite expanse of nothing, from which the gods and the cosmos "came into being" (line 117). What is so fascinating about the texts examined in this paper is that none of them conceptualize the primordial state in this manner. It is clear from looking at Figure 2 that there exists either primordial beings or matter prior to the beginning of creation, and often, there is also action in the form of a primordial struggle that precedes the act of creation. As I will demonstrate, the primordial world is one often filled with active agents, primeval elements, and dynamic forces.

The Enuma Elish and the Priestly creation stories present most overtly a primordial state that is watery, as demonstrated in Figure 2. Although there is no explicit reference to the primordial universe in Psalms 89 and 104, there are allusions to watery forces and primeval creatures, which seem to fit the motif of primordial water seen in the Enuma Elish and Genesis 1-2:4a. Ovid's Metamorphoses initially seems to be the creation story that doesn't belong due to its divergence from the primordial water motif. Its description of the rough, unformed, pre-creation universe, however, is highly reminiscent of the Priestly description of the primordial universe. Similarly, the concept of chaos and disorder that is emphasized continuously in Ovid's description of the primordial state can be seen in the Enuma Elish. Finally, the primordial struggle phase of creation narratives provides one of the most fascinating points of comparison considering how consistently it appears across the examined texts except in the Priestly creation account.

Primordial Waters

The primordial universe phase within the creation narratives examined in this paper is often characterized by water motifs. As is evident in Figure 2, the Enuma Elish and Genesis 1-2:4a explicitly describe their primordial states as watery in one way or another. In the Enuma Elish, two water deities, Tiamat (the female) and Apsu (the male) are the sole inhabitants of the primordial world, whereas P states that the pre-creation world consists of "darkness" (Gen 1:2) and "tehom" ("the deep", Gen 1:2). While scholars such as David Toshio Tsumura claim that "it is phonologically impossible to conclude that tehom 'ocean' was borrowed from Tiamat", numerous scholars believe that the Hebrew term "tehom" is linguistically related to the name "Tiamat". Certain scholars, such as Kapelrud, go so far as to imply that P was aware of the Babylonian creation myth and worked with it while crafting the Priestly creation account. The shared watery form and potential linguistic relationship invite a comparison of tehom, a term that appears throughout Biblical literature, with the primordial goddess Tiamat. The table below presents a schematic comparison of the various traits and associations of both tehom and Tiamat.

---


221 "[...] thereby expressly indicating again that he [P] knew this narrative [the Enuma Elish], but changed it consciously", (Arvid S. Kapelrud "The Mythological Features in Genesis Chapter I and the Author's Intentions," Vetus Testamentum 24, no. 2 (1974): 183.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tehom (Genesis 1-2:4a)</th>
<th>Tiamat (Enuma Elish)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water, &quot;the deep&quot;</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes paired with Yam/the Sea, (i.e. Job 28:14)</td>
<td>Male Counterpart/Mate: Apsu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undifferentiated mass of water to be separated</td>
<td>Intermingles waters with Apsu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptive to God's creative powers</td>
<td>Pro(creative) Powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material of creation</td>
<td>Mother of gods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not disturbed, but differentiated by voice of God</td>
<td>Disturbed by voices of gods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inanimate (in Genesis 1)</td>
<td>Vengeful agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home of Leviathan (Job 41:24)</td>
<td>Monstrous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admits, with Yam, that it doesn't have wisdom (Job 28:14)</td>
<td>Full of power over gods (except Marduk)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3**

**Mapping the Associations of Tehom and Tiamat**

At first glance there are striking similarities between the associations of the Babylonian Tiamat and the Biblical *tehom* beyond their shared status as watery and primordial. Beyond P's description in Genesis 1 numerous Biblical passages refer or allude to *tehom*, which help to construct a deeper understanding of the connotations underlying *tehom*'s usage in the Biblical creation story. Grammatically speaking *tehom* can be feminine, a characteristic emphasized by the occasional pairing of *tehom* with *Yam* ("the sea"), which is shown in Figure 3. Just as Tiamat is a female water deity with a male counterpart, so too is *tehom* ("the deep") a feminine water entity with a masculine counterpart, *Yam* ("the sea"). Additionally, in some passages *tehom* is personified. For example, in Job 28:14, "the deep [<i>tehom</i>] says, 'It is not in me'" (emphasis added); the author of Job grants *tehom* direct discourse, which personifies *tehom* and makes *tehom* an agent, in a manner that feels somewhat reminiscent of Tiamat's own anthropomorphic agency. While these similarities are intriguing, and encourage further comparison, upon closer
inspection there are several motivic inversions and digressions between the characterizations of *tehom* and Tiamat.

At first glance when looking at Figure 3 line four, for example, seems to suggest a parallel between *tehom*, which is an undifferentiated mass of water in Genesis 1:2, and Tiamat, who intermingles her waters with Apsu in Tablet I. Where Tiamat is an active participant in having "mixed their [Tiamat's and Apsu's] waters together" (Tablet I, page 233), the dark mass of *tehom*'s waters is separated by Elohim: where Tiamat has agency, *tehom* has passivity. If we look closely at the characteristics of *tehom* and Tiamat diagramed in Figure 3, this pattern of passivity versus agency is prevalent throughout their respective associations. In the first lines of the *Enuma Elish* Tiamat is characterized as a "maker" (Tablet I, page 233), as a mother "who bore them all [the gods]" (Tablet I, page 233), and as an active and equal participant in the mingling of waters with Apsu as she exercises her creative and procreative powers. On the other hand, *tehom* is an inert bulk of water in the Priestly creation story that has no will, that takes no action, and that is not relevant to the creation story until "God made the expanse, and it separated the water" (Gen 1:7): *tehom* does not create, but is receptive to creation. This inversion of roles played by the two primordial waters can be seen even in their similarities. Though *tehom* is often grammatically gendered feminine and paired with *Yam*, a male counterpart, *tehom* is not actually a female being in the same way that Tiamat is a female being. Tiamat is not only an active agent with her own will, a gendered mate, and (pro)creative powers, but she exhibits anthropomorphic behaviors: she is annoyed by the noise of her children (Tablet I, page 233), and enacts vengeful justice in return for the murder of her mate, Apsu (Tablet I, page 237). In comparison to Tiamat's richly anthropomorphic characterization throughout the *Enuma Elish*, the passivity of the inanimate *tehom* in the Priestly creation story becomes even more starkly apparent.
The inversion of the way in which the primordial waters are characterized between the *Enuma Elish* and the Priestly account is quite purposeful. It is dependent upon the role that the waters play in the overarching structure of the narrative, and the way that the narrative is actually structured. P's Elohim of the Genesis 1 creation story is singular and omnipotent. The model of creation present in this account is a mixture of the divine wisdom and divine presence models. The anthropomorphism, the freewill, and thus the potential for real threat, which are evident in Tiamat are all stripped away in P's characterization of *tehom* because Elohim's absolute power and supremacy necessitate the neutralization of any force that could appear to challenge Elohim's authority and power. P crafts an Elohim who is so omnipotent that He need not actually do anything to create the universe, but merely announce it — the Priestly Elohim's creation is effortless because his power is unchallenged. In conceptualizing an Elohim so omnipotent and singular, there is simply no room left for a primordial force that could potentially pose a threat, let alone actively wage war.

By contrast we know that Marduk, the creator god of the *Enuma Elish*, fits the Divine Warrior trope perfectly, and creation in the *Enuma Elish* clearly demonstrates the divine power model. By virtue of these facts, Tiamat is necessarily an anthropomorphic and active agent. In the divine power model, creation is enacted by the victor of a primordial struggle and constructed from the remnants of that struggle; in order to have a real struggle, the narrative needs an antagonist that poses a real threat. By endowing her with agency and power, the author

---

222 The term used in this context meaning "to create" is *bārā‘*, which means "shape, fashion, create, always of divine activity" and is rarely found in the Hebrew Bible "except in P and Is*²*. See: Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1906), 135.


of the *Enuma Elish* opens a space for Tiamat to become Marduk's (and the rest of the gods')
antagonist, their enemy. It is only because of Tiamat's free will and richly anthropomorphic
characterization that she becomes so annoyed with her children for being noisy, and enacts harsh
revenge upon the gods for Apsu's murder — in simpler terms, her characterization allows for
conflict.

*Primordial Struggle*

While conflict is noticeably and purposefully absent in the Priestly creation story of
Genesis 1-2:4a, the narrative phase of primordial struggle is present in several of the texts
examined in this paper, though to varying degrees. This phase is most overt in the *Enuma Elish*
during the cosmic battle between Marduk and Tiamat, however both Psalms 89 and 104 include
elements of conflict, though their elements are briefer and milder in nature when compared to the
*Enuma Elish*. In the two Psalms, just as in the *Enuma Elish*, the (potential) antagonist of the
creator god is watery or has watery associations. Knowing the importance that the antagonist's
associations play within the larger structure of creation in the *Enuma Elish*, the initial similarities
seen in both Psalms invites comparison. The table below is an expansion of Figure 3 above, and
schematically explores the nature of similarities and differences between each text's primordial,
watery being.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genesis 1-2:4a</th>
<th>Enuma Elish</th>
<th>Psalm 89</th>
<th>Psalm 104</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tehom</td>
<td>Tiamat</td>
<td>Rahab</td>
<td>Waters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Water Goddess</td>
<td>Primeval Monster</td>
<td>Waters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&quot;the deep&quot;)</td>
<td>(female)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(grammatically feminine)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional Male Counterpart: Yam (&quot;the sea&quot;) (Job 28:14)</td>
<td>Male Counterpart &amp; Mate (Apsu)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2: Elusive Serpent and Twisting Serpent (Is 27:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw material of creation</td>
<td>Mother of Gods</td>
<td>&quot;Surger&quot;²²⁵</td>
<td>Flooded the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptive to Creation</td>
<td>(Pro)Creative Powers</td>
<td>Hold rafters of heavens</td>
<td>Breathes fire (Job 41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive and inanimate</td>
<td>Vengeful war against gods</td>
<td>Flee from and Obedient of Elohim</td>
<td>Divine beings fear Leviathan (Job 41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inert mass</td>
<td>Monstrous</td>
<td>&quot;dragon&quot; (Is 51:9)</td>
<td>Fearful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiated, and bounded</td>
<td>Killed, dismembered, and bounded</td>
<td>Crushed; hacked into pieces (Is 51:9)</td>
<td>Bounded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4**

Diagramming the Associations of Primordial Water Entities/Antagonists

It is indisputable from Figure 4 that Tiamat is an antagonistic figure within the *Enuma Elish*. This is no surprise, considering Marduk typifies the Divine Warrior motif, and that the *Enuma Elish* clearly fits the model of creation from divine power. We also know, however, that the divine power model of creation best fits Psalm 89 as well. Although Rahab is just barely mentioned in Psalm 89, the mighty Elohim "crushed" (Ps 89:11) him, and "scattered [His] enemies" (Ps 89:11) within the same verse. It is reasonable to extrapolate that Rahab is one of Elohim many primordial enemies, and we know from other Biblical literature that Rahab took the form of a "dragon" (Is 51:9), which is comparable to a monster that could dwell in the

²²⁵ See footnote 226 on page 127.
These associations seem to position Rahab as one of Elohim's "cosmic enemies", and that Elohim "crushed" (Ps 89:11) him suggests a "powerful victory". Nevertheless, in its presentation of Rahab, Psalm 89 minimizes his threat. There is no mention within the Psalm of his menacing dragon form, nor any substantial description of Elohim's fight with the primeval monster. In fact, the struggle with Rahab is mentioned in such a cavalier manner within Psalm 89 to suggest no real struggle involved in Elohim's defeat of Rahab.

This rather lukewarm and uneventful description of Elohim's victory over Rahab in Psalm 89 provides a stark contrast to the nearly impossible struggle the Babylonian gods endured while facing Tiamat, whose "actions were too much" (Tablet II, page 241) for all but Marduk to conquer. Tiamat's role as the physical incarnation of the primordial waters, as evidenced in Figure 4, and which demonstrate the "danger inherent in [her] nature" that contains "the threat of chaos before the creation could be completed", actively invite conflict into the narrative. She must present a substantial threat to the Babylonian gods in order to increase Marduk's glory when he finally defeats Tiamat, as fits with the Divine Warrior motif and the divine power creation model. The creation of the cosmos is then a direct result of Tiamat's defeat, since her corpse is used as the raw material of creation, and Marduk's creative acts are a form of enemy execution and war reparations in a way. Although Psalm 89 also loosely fits the divine power model, the Biblical god occupies a different position than Marduk. Elohim does not wage war against Rahab in the psalm because, while still presented as an enemy, Rahab is conceived of as

---

226 Rahab is "a mythical monster, the name of which means 'surger', and plays upon the restlessness and crashing of the sea"; see Koehler and Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 1193.1. It is also a term that could be understood as "those who press, meaning enemies"; see Koehler and Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 1193.3.
228 Ibid.
significantly less threatening. Rahab is not presented as a nearly insurmountable obstacle standing in the way of creation in the way that Tiamat is, instead his defeat appears to be an inconsequential and unrelated coincidence that occurs within a psalm that also recounts Elohim's creation of the universe. This minimized characterization serves as an intermediate step in the ontological shift between the *Enuma Elish* and Genesis 1.

The minimization of Rahab is even less stark than that of Leviathan in Psalm 104. Within the actual psalm Leviathan is mentioned somewhat offhandedly, as Rahab is mentioned in Psalm 89, but, as Figure 4 demonstrates, Leviathan's associations in other Biblical texts are fierce and frightening. Mentioned in Isaiah 27 as a pair of serpents, and described in Job 41 as a terrifying, war-like monster that even divinities fear, the Leviathan outside of Psalm 104 appears to closely resemble Tiamat (and Apsu) of the *Enuma Elish*. What is so striking about Leviathan's presentation in Psalm 104, however, is that the monster and the threat of inherent danger are diminished to an astonishing, almost laughable, degree. In cataloging all of Elohim's creation, the author of Psalm 104 states that Elohim created Leviathan "to sport with" (Ps 104:26), or as a pet to play with in other words. The author of Psalm 104 goes a step beyond Psalm 89's author in demonstrating Elohim's superiority and power: rather than cavalierly brush aside the mention of Elohim's victory over a sea monster, Psalm 104 intentionally strips Leviathan of its menace and threat, altering the beast from monster to playful pet.\(^{230}\) This minimization of the normally fearsome Leviathan serves to underline not only Elohim's supreme power, authority, and singularity, but also the wisdom with which Elohim created the universe. A world that is created

---

\(^{230}\) The creation of Leviathan as a pet-type creature, rather than the menacing monster is has often been portrayed as, is reminiscent of Day 4 in the Priestly creation account. Along with the "swarms of living creatures" (Gen 1:20) in the sea, Elohim also creates "the great sea monsters" (Gen 1:21), grouping them in with all the other sea creatures. By associating sea monsters with all other sea animals, as well as by having Elohim deem them "good" (Gen 1:21), P similarly removes any menace or threat from Elohim's traditional creation enemy.
with wisdom is not a world that would include monstrous, serpentine enemies that could
legitimately threaten Elohim's power — it simply would not be logical for Elohim to create such
a creature. Therefore, the transformation of Leviathan into a docile creature that exists within the
confines of creation fits the divine wisdom creation model apparent in Psalm 104.\footnote{Mark Smith, \textit{The Priestly Vision}, 13.}

The Leviathan is not, however, alone in Psalm 104: the author also describes the waters
of the world, "\textit{tehom}" (Ps 104:6), using the exact same terminology as the Priestly account.
Unlike the Priestly \textit{tehom}, the \textit{tehom} of Psalm 104, while not fully anthropomorphized and
embodied like Tiamat, are clearly personified, and are thus potential antagonists of Elohim.
Despite this parallel with Tiamat, Figure 4 clearly demonstrates that the waters of Psalm 104 are
characterized as the opposite of antagonistic — they are actually described as obedient, even
fearful, of Elohim. If anything, \textit{Elohim} acts as antagonist in Psalm 104 as the waters "fled at
[His] blast" and "rushed away at the sound of [His] thunder" (Ps 104:7). The waters'
personification clearly positions them, through the expression of fear, as subservient to Elohim,
His powers, and His might. It is not that there is no conflict, however, as Elohim clearly uses a
display of force to influence the waters, but rather the conflict does not pose any legitimate threat
to Elohim. The waters, which flee from Elohim's powers and which obediently allow themselves
to be bounded "so that they never again cover the earth" (Ps 104:9), do not contain any inherent
danger. Quite the contrary, Elohim seems to have total control over the waters at all times, which
often seem less personified and more inanimate. The waters are objectified as Elohim put "the
rafters of His lofts in the waters" (Ps 104:3) and when He "made the deep cover it as a garment"
(Ps 104:6); He manhandles the waters, acting upon them as though they were passive, as the
Priestly \textit{tehom} is passive and receptive to Elohim's will and creative acts. While there are
allusions to a battle between Elohim and the waters in Psalm 104, there is nothing that explicitly demonstrates a conflict because the Elohim of Psalm 104 is wise and creates the universe with a wisdom that leaves no room for any entity that can reasonably challenge Elohim's power and authority.

The passivity and receptivity of Psalm 104's obedient waters recalls the similarly characterized *tehom* of the Priestly creation story. Although both of the Biblical psalms examined here minimize the conflict between Elohim and the primordial monsters or waters to some degree, both still retain the element of the ontological autonomy of primordial matter, which is so explicit within the *Enuma Elish*. The Priestly creation story, on the other hand, completely erases any hint of primordial conflict from its narrative, just as it purposefully neutralizes *tehom* as a force and a threat. The inversion of these two narrative phases, antagonistic primordial waters and primordial struggle, go hand-in-hand to convey not only Elohim's singularity, but also his omnipotent supremacy over all of creation. Since the universe is created with divine wisdom in Genesis 1-2:4a, nothing *within* creation can rival Elohim, but the Priestly author constructs a story in which Elohim's authority is so absolute that nothing *outside of* creation, namely *tehom*, poses any real danger nor provokes any real conflict. The Priestly author makes the conscious choice to describe the primordial state as watery, and to refer to an entity, *tehom*, which could evoke the image of Tiamat or other watery primeval monsters, so that the inversion of these narrative phases would be all the more striking for his readers.

At this point, it is pertinent to mention Ovid's conception of the primordial universe, which is *not* watery or monstrous in any way (and thus is not included in Figure 4), and is described with the Hesiodic term "Chaos" (Ovid 1.7). The primordial Chaos of the *Metamorphoses*, however, consists of all "*discordia semina rerum*" ("the warring seeds of the
universe", 1.9) jumbled together in "rudis indigestaque moles" ("a rough and disordered mass", 1.7), quite unlike Hesiod's understanding of Chaos. Despite this rather drastic departure from the mythic and watery primordial worlds of ancient Near Eastern literature, Ovid's pre-creation state still presents themes of conflict quite explicitly. In the Biblical Psalms, Elohim encounters personified waters and primeval monsters like Leviathan and Rahab, while in the Enuma Elish Marduk battles against Tiamat, whereas in the Metamorphoses it is not the creator deus ("god", 1.21) who struggles with any antagonist. In fact, there is no antagonistic figure within Ovid's creation. Instead, it is the raw material of creation, the "semina rerum" ("seeds of the universe", 1.7), which are "discordia" ("warring", 1.7) against each other. More specifically, each element "pugnabant" ("was fighting", 1.19) with its opposite as "frigida pugnabant calidis, umentia siccis, / mollia cum duris, sine pondere habentia pondus" ("cold things were fighting hot things, wet things [were fighting] dry things, soft with hard, things having weight [were fighting] things without weight", 1.19-20), in a frenzied description of internal and local disarray.

It is interesting to consider Ovid's natural-philosophic presentation of Chaos as opposite elements "discordia" ("warring", 1.7) and "pugnabant" ("fighting", 1.19) each other in light of the actual battle that takes place between Marduk and Tiamat in the Enuma Elish. Ovid presents the physical reality of these elements symbolically, using language with clear militaristic connotations to emphasize the chaotic and unstable primordial state. Unlike the Enuma Elish, however, Ovid has the elements fighting their opposites, which alludes to knowledge within the field of natural philosophy, whereas Tiamat wages war against the gods to avenge the death of her opposite, her mate and male counterpart, Apsu. Additionally, Ovid characterizes the primordial struggle between the elements as a "litem" ("dispute" or "lawsuit", 1.21), with the
creator *deus* ("god") working to "*diremit*" ("divide", 1.21) this *litem*, essentially functioning as a third-party arbiter of Chaos.

**Primordial Potential**

The ideas in which Ovid roots his motifs of primordial conflict are atomistic in nature. Ovid describes the composition of this primordial Chaos as "*rudis indigestaque moles / nec quicquam nisi pondus iners congestaque eodem / non bene iunctarum discordia semina rerum*" ("a rough and disordered mass not anything except an inert weight, and the warring seeds of the universe heaped up in the same [place] having been not well joined", 1.7-9). The tone of this description feels rather clinical, not at all like one would expect from an epic poem. The key phrase to notice in this passage is "*semina rerum*" ("the seeds of the universe", 1.9), which would have been immediately recognized as Lucretian atomistic terminology by Ovid's contemporary readers. Sara K. Myers notes that the *Metamorphoses* is purposefully intertextual with Lucretius' influential work *De Rerum Natura* ("On the Nature of the Universe"), a didactic poem written about a century before the *Metamorphoses* which discusses Epicurean philosophy and physics using poetic conventions such as metaphor and dactylic hexameter. One of Lucretius' aims in *De Rerum Natura*, as Myers puts it, was "to challenge the validity of mythological explanation", and demonstrate that the universe operated more by chance than by any divine interaction.

---

232 It is important to note that dactylic hexameter was understood in the ancient and classical Greco-Roman world to be the meter of *epic* poetry, such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and was also used by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*.

Ovid's deliberate allusions to Lucretian philosophical ideas and language imbue his creation account with an almost atheistic naturalism while his mythico-poetic subject injects polytheistic supernaturalism. The dissonance between these two ideologies is prevalent throughout the cosmogony, though Myers suggests that Ovid's continuous use of Lucretian language maybe be a reaction against "Lucretius' purely materialistic explanation of natural phenomena [...] by incorporating physics into his unrelentingly unnaturalistic and supernatural metamorphoses". If this is the case, then Ovid uses the Metamorphoses to approach Lucretius' De Rerum Natura essentially in the same way that Lucretius approached polytheistic mythology. Lucretius uses conventions of epic poetry in De Rerum Natura, which purposefully alludes to literature in which the gods are heavy handed in their meddling, to argue against the intervention of those very gods. Ovid then uses Lucretian atomistic language throughout the cosmogony of the universe in the Metamorphoses, which is a universe rife with the intervention of traditional Greco-Roman deities. The tension created by the dissonance between the Lucretian language and naturalistic descriptions in this mythic work set up the reader for the intensely supernatural and poetic episodes that comprise the rest of the poem.

One striking and obvious way that Ovid increases tension with the Lucretian naturalistic language in the cosmogony episode is by calling the primordial state "Chaos" (1.7), a term borrowed from Hesiod's Theogony. Not only does the nod to Hesiod work to integrate Ovid within the revered tradition of mythico-epic Greek literature, but his allusion to the Theogony, which describes the births and lineages of the gods, also has obvious supernatural undercurrents at odds with the atomistic and natural-philosophic language used elsewhere. What is fascinating about Ovid's borrowing from Hesiod, however, is that he completely alters the original meaning

---

234 Myers, "Cosmogonic Metamorphosis," 54.
235 Hesiod, Theogony, trans. Stanley Lombardo, line 116 page 64.
of the idea of "Chaos" to fit with the naturalist language within his account. In the *Theogony*, Hesiod states, "in the beginning there was only Chaos " (line 116), with "Χάος" understood as an infinite darkness, an abyss, or a chasm — a vast emptiness, a negative space.\(^{236}\) Ovid also says that "ante" ("before", 1.5) creation, "unus erat toto naturae vultus in orbe, / quem dixere Chaos" ("the appearance of nature was singular in the whole world, which they called Chaos", 1.6-7); rather than an emptiness or abyss, though, Ovid describes Chaos as a "moles" ("mass", 1.7) in which all the "semina rerum" ("seeds of the universe", 1.9) were "congesta" ("heaped up", 1.8) together. Where Hesiod claims that the first divinities, such as Gaia, Tartaros, and Eros, simply "came into being" (line 117), essentially spontaneously and from nothing, Ovid describes creation as happening when these "semina rerum" (1.9) are "diremit" ("divided", 1.21) or "secrevit" ("separated", 1.23) from each other.

While Ovid inverts Hesiod's conception of pre-creation Chaos for his own purposes, his understanding of this raw primordial material parallels that of the *Enuma Elish* in striking ways. Both texts begin by defining the primordial universe by what it is not. While Ovid states that Chaos existed "ante mare et terras et, quod tegit omnia, caelum" ("before the sea and the lands that the sky which covers everything", 1.5) and before Titan (1.10), Phoebe (1.11), and Amphitrite (1.14), the *Enuma Elish* begins by saying that Apsu and Tiamat existed "when skies above were not yet named nor earth below pronounced by name" (Tablet I page 233). This stylistic choice creates a negative space waiting to be filled by creation. This negative space is a rhetorical trick, however, as the primordial universe is not an empty abyss, but is occupied. Ovid fills primordial Chaos with "discordia semina rerum" ("the warring seeds of the universe", 1.9), characterized by "frigida pugnabant calidis, uementia siccis, / mollia cum duris, sine pondere

---

\(^{236}\) For further lexicographical information, see page 120.
habentia pondus" ("cold things were fighting hot things, wet things [were fighting] dry things, soft [were fighting] with hard, things having weight [were fighting] things without weight", 1.19-20), opposites that are forcibly "congesta" ("heaped up", 1.8) into the " unus [...] naturae vultus" ("single appearance of nature", 1.6). Although Ovid describes the elements in philosophical terms reminiscent of Empedocles,237 the core feature of comingling opposite elements is strangely reminiscent of the male and female (thus opposite) primordial water deities, Apsu and Tiamat, who "mixed their waters together" (Tablet I page 233). In a similar vein of thought, Ovid describes Chaos as a state when all of nature had " unus [...] vultus" ("one appearance", 1.6), though "vultus" can also be translated as "face", when all the opposite elements were fighting each other "corpore in uno" ("within one body", 1.18). The use of anthropomorphic vocabulary to describe the raw material of the universe invites a comparison with the Enuma Elish, in which Marduk uses Tiamat's "monstrous shape" to make "marvels " (Tablet IV page 255), using a literal body as the raw material for creation. While Ovid's description of Chaos feels very philosophical and naturalist, it still has fascinating parallels with the polytheistic Enuma Elish.

Narrative Function: The Structure of Creation & Creation as Separation

Having established that the conception of the primordial universe as full, or partially full, of matter, beings, and conflicts is common throughout the creation stories examined in this chapter, the question that comes to mind is how does creation occur? Rather than the deities that spontaneously "came into being" (line 117) out of the Abyss of Hesiod's Theogony, the authors of the texts examined below construe the act of creation through acts of separation. The narrative phase of creation as separation runs throughout the Priestly, Babylonian, and Ovidian

237 Sara K. Myers, "Cosmogonic Metamorphosis," 42. Also see footnote 242 on page 142 for more on Empedocles.
creation accounts. Just as each account conceptualized the primordial universe with slight variation, however, so too does each account approach the concept of creation through separation. The method, driving force, and organizing principle behind each set of separations is entangled with each text's conception of the primordial state.

**Creation as Separation and Expansion in Genesis 1-2:4a**

Although we have established that the primordial state of the universe in the Priestly creation story consists of a bulk of undifferentiated water and darkness, the concept of "chaos" is not absent from the Priestly creation story. While Chaos has a very specific set of associations in the *Metamorphoses*, it does have parallels within Genesis 1-2:4a. Ovid describes Chaos as "rudis indigestaque moles" ("a rough and disordered mass", 1.7), while P describes the primordial world as "being unformed and void" (Gen 1:2): the imagery of these two pre-creation states is remarkably similar and invites a closer look, beyond the water nature of "tehom" (Gen 1:2), at the character of the Priestly primordial world. While Ovid's Chaos as a "moles" ("mass", 1.7) containing all "semina rerum" ("the seeds of the universe", 1.9) heaped and jumbled together, more explicitly contains all of the materials of creation that the creator *deus* ("god") only needs to untangle, P's primordial universe draws many subtle parallels to Ovid's Chaos. Though the Priestly primordial universe does not contain all the elements of the universe, it is characterized by a single *undifferentiated* mass of "darkness" and "tehom" ("the deep", Gen 1:2), which, in conjunction with the description of "unformed and void" (Gen 1:2), suggests the potential for differentiation and formation.

---

238 See page 151 footnote 245 for lexicographical information on *tohû* and *bohû*. 

As the primordial universe does not contain all matter, the Priestly Elohim does create certain elements *ex nihilo*, such as light. In the case of light, Elohim's created element is the opposite of a pre-existing element, namely darkness, thus he must separate these in order to create Day and Night (Gen 1:4-5). Therefore, the undifferentiated primordial mass is differentiated, and through this process of separation the created universe begins to expand.

Suddenly there is not just "darkness" (Gen 1:2), but darkness and light, night and day. Elohim continues the act of separation throughout the Priestly creation story, each successive separation building off the previous action, creating the universe through expansion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primordial: Darkness and Water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1: Light from Dark, Day from Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2: Waters above from Waters below (celestial from earthly waters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3: Dry land from Sea (waters below), and vegetation (life)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4: Lights in the sky (sun and moon), and Stars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 5: Sky and Sea Creatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 6: Land creatures and Humans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5**

Visualizing the Expanding Nature of Priestly Creation

---

239 The term translated as "separate" (Gen 1:4) is *lēhabdîl* in Hebrew, a form that is a technical Priestly term for a ritual, cosmological act. To separate through *lēhabdîl* is to differentiate between the clean and unclean, between the holy and the profane (see: Lev 10:10, 11:47). Jacob Milgrom states that *lēhabdîl* "is the essence of the priestly function", and specifically cites the separation of the clean and unclean. Even more interestingly, Milgrom states that "the failure of the priests to distinguish between the sacred and common has resulted in the desecration of God's name", and that it constitutes violence, "the very sin for which God brought a flood on mankind". See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: The Anchor Bible, Doubleday, 1991), 615.

As Figure 5 demonstrates, each successive day of creation in the Priestly account builds off the previous day as the created universe is filled with increasingly specified, and increasingly complex elements. For example, you can see in Figure 5 on Day 2 Elohim separated the primordial waters into the waters above and below, with the waters above becoming the Sky (Gen 1:8). Then on Day 3, the waters below are separated from dry land and become the Sea (Gen 1:10), which itself becomes more complex on Day 5 when Elohim fills it with sea creatures (Gen 1:20). The creative acts of separation in the Priestly account cannot only be visualized as they are in Figure 5, but must simultaneously be visualized as they are in Figure 1, that is as two-fold in nature. As Figure 1 demonstrated, on Days 4-6 Elohim expands upon and complicates the creation he enacted on Days 1-3, which also functions to expand the universe through increasing differentiation and specification. The creative separation in the Priestly account, therefore, moves in two directions at once. While it expands outward as each successive day complicates and expands the previous, it also expands as each broad category from Days 1-3 is endowed with complexity in Days 4-6. The purpose of the act of separation as creation in the Priestly account, then, is to expand the scope of the created universe.

**Creation as Bodily Separation in the 'Enuma Elish'**

The creation account in the *Enuma Elish* provides an even more striking approach to the theme of separation as creation. While Marduk, the creator god of the *Enuma Elish*, does not actually create any features *ex nihilo*, as Elohim does in the Priestly account, Marduk does divide up the primordial waters, embodied in Tiamat, to create the cosmos. Where Elohim separates opposite natural elements, such as light and dark, or water and land, He thus creates the universe through expansion, Marduk separates the primordial waters in a hyper-literal sense. After he had
"vanquished" Tiamat and "extinguished her life" (Tablet IV page 253), he "divided the monstrous shape and created marvels" (Tablet IV page 255), those marvels being the cosmos. In the *Enuma Elish*, the concept of separation as creation becomes dismemberment as separation, as Figure 2 illustrates. Creation is constructed out of the dismembered body parts of Tiamat's corpse, so the structure of the created universe is inextricably tied up with Tiamat's anthropomorphic anatomy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anatomy of Tiamat</th>
<th>Cosmic Creation</th>
<th>Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First half of body</td>
<td>The Sky (Waters above bolted into place)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First half of body</td>
<td>Holds celestial shrines and cult centers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First half of body</td>
<td>Stars, constellations for each god (stars used to make calendar)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribs (first half of body)</td>
<td>Open gates</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liver (first half of body)</td>
<td>Highest point of the sky</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First half of body (sky)</td>
<td>Moon (designates time)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spittle</td>
<td>Clouds</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poison</td>
<td>Winds, rain, fog (Marduk's own elements)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head (second half of body)</td>
<td>Mound (mountain perhaps?)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes (second half of body)</td>
<td>Sources for the Euphrates and Tigris</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Udder&quot; (second half of body)</td>
<td>Mountains</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tail</td>
<td>Ties it all together</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thigh</td>
<td>Props up the sky</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6**

**Mapping the Anthropomorphic Structure of Creation in the *Enuma Elish***

What becomes evident by looking at Figure 6 is that there is no added element of expansion in Marduk's creative separation of Tiamat's corpse. Even though both Elohim and Marduk begin with primordial water as their pre-creation materials, the inanimate mass of *tehom* does not contain all the elements of the universe. Elohim must instead create those *ex nihilo*, then differentiate them from their opposite and further complicate them through specification. All this leads to increasing levels of complexity and space within the movement of the Priestly account.
that are not present in the *Enuma Elish*'s creation story. Marduk's dismemberment of Tiamat is an act of pure separation. Everything that Marduk needs to create the universe already exists within Tiamat's body: as the top half becomes the sky and the bottom half becomes the earth, the body parts and organs within those spheres are each converted into some feature of the created universe. There is no need for Marduk to add complexity, he merely needs to designate and transform: in this way Tiamat's ribs become celestial gates, her poison becomes weather phenomena, and her eyes become the sources of rivers.

Rather than serving as a vehicle through which the creator deity expands the created universe and adds complexity to its milieu, the act of separation serves a different purpose in the *Enuma Elish*. As we already know the *Enuma Elish* fits the model of creation from divine power, which is characterized by a creator god's victory over a cosmic enemy and his subsequent creation of the universe using the remnants of that victory. Tiamat has been established as the antagonist of the Babylonian gods, and she fights them in a cosmic battle that is almost equally matched. Marduk is the only god within the pantheon who is powerful enough to defeat Tiamat, and it is because of her great power that Marduk dismembers her. Not only is Tiamat's dismemberment a punishment, a way to disfigure and disgrace the body of the enemy in the aftermath of a battle, it is also a safety precaution. The threat that Tiamat posed not only to the gods' power, but also to their very existence, was so great that the only way to ensure her continual defeat was to chop her "in half like a fish for drying" (Tablet IV page 255). Once dismembered, the first thing that Marduk does, as Figure 6 illustrates, is to put half of her body "up to roof the sky" before he "drew a bolt across and made a guard hold it" so that "her waters [...] could not escape" (Tablet IV page 255, emphasis added). Not only does Marduk separate out her body, her waters, to make "marvels" (Tablet IV page 255), but he also bolts them in place so
that they "could not escape" (Tablet IV page 255). This language clearly speaks to the anxiety that the gods had about Tiamat's continued threat even after her death. It is clear that, although the separation of Tiamat does not expand and add complexity to the universe, it does serve a very specific purpose: to ensure the safety of the gods, and through this, the safety of the created world.  

Creation as Elemental Separation in the 'Metamorphoses'

As with the Priestly and Enuma Elish creation accounts, the creation of the Metamorphoses is driven by the act of separation. Rather unlike the Priestly and Babylonian stories, however, the audience can infer from the very beginning that Ovid's creation will involve the act of separation. Ovid explicitly states that the primordial state of the universe, "Chaos" (1.7), is a "moles" ("mass", 1.7) that contains all the "semina rerum" ("seeds of the universe", 1.9). Within the first ten lines of the poem, Ovid tells the reader that all matter already exists: it is merely "indigesta" ("disordered", 1.7) and "discordia" ("warring", 1.9). He is clear in saying that "erat et tellus illic et pontus et aër" ("there was land there and sea and air", 1.15), even if it was "instabilis tellus, innabilis unda, / lucis egens aër" ("unsteady land, an un-swimmable wave, air lacking lights", 1.16-17). Everything that comprised recognizable universe "erat [...] illic" ("was there", 1.15), it already existed, simply in a tangled and unstable form. By clearly stating this Ovid reveals to us that there will be no creation ex nihilo because all of the raw material is laid out before us, seething with potential. Ovid's stark explicitness is quite different from P's more ambiguous approach to narrating creation: P does describe the primordial world as an

---

241 The language of the flood narrative in both the Epic of Gilgamesh and Genesis 6-9 implies a removal of the boundaries put in place during creation to restrain the primordial waters. See chapter 2 page 82-84, 99 for a further discussion on this idea.
undifferentiated and inert mass, but it is a mass of water and darkness, it is not a mass of all the "semina rerum" ("seeds of the universe", 1.9), which leaves space for P's Elohim to exercise his omnipotence and create certain features, such as light, *ex nihilo*. Even the *Enuma Elish* does not explicitly state that the material of the cosmos is already present, merely unrecognizable, as the *Metamorphoses* does, though it would have been implicitly understood that Tiamat would be killed and the cosmos would be created to those familiar with other divine power creation models.

Though Ovid clearly states that the primordial state of the universe, Chaos, contains matter in a "moles" ("mass", 1.7), his description of this singularity does reveal the principles that will characterize the rest of the cosmogony. The makeup of Ovid's cosmos is characterized by the principle of natural-philosophy and the Empedoclean elements theory, which had been popular for about 2000 years prior to Ovid's period of authorship.\(^{242}\) Chaos contains "tellus" ("earth", 1.15), "pontus" ("sea", 1.15), "aër" ("air", 1.15), and various "semina" ("seeds", 1.9) with properties like "figida" ("cold", 1.19), "calidis" ("hot", 1.19), "umentia" ("wet", 1.19), "siccis" ("dry", 1.19), "mollia" ("soft", 1.20), "duris", ("hot", 1.20), "sine pondere" ("weightless", 1.20), and "habentia pondus" ("having weight", 1.20). These physical properties are integral to the structure of Ovid's cosmogony, and in fact are the driving force of the creative separation in this episode.

\(^{242}\) Empedocles posited four material elements, namely fire, air, water, and earth, which could be combined in different amounts and combinations to form all matter. He also believes that no matter is destroyed or created, only transformed, which lends itself very well, not only to Ovid's conception of creation, but also to the larger theme of metamorphosis in the *Metamorphoses*. Empedocles does, however, also believe that the elements are transformed, arranged, and manipulated by the forces of Love and Strife, which Ovid does not draw upon as heavily. *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Empedocles," accessed April 20, 2017, [http://0-academic.eb.com.luna.wellesley.edu/levels/collegiate/article/Empedocles/32550](http://0-academic.eb.com.luna.wellesley.edu/levels/collegiate/article/Empedocles/32550).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chaos: all elements warring together in a heap; singular in nature</th>
<th>Empedocles' 4 Elements</th>
<th>Metamorphoses first separation (ordered naturally when elements separated)</th>
<th>Metamorphoses further separation (caused by the Craftsman God)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Fiery, weightless power in vault of world</td>
<td>Stars seethe from the darkness (in the celestial floor)</td>
<td>The Gods inhabit the heavens with the stars (the celestial floor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Sky (weightless heavens and denser air)</td>
<td>Lighter air above these zones (but more dense than fire by how much water is lighter than earth)</td>
<td>Storms (thunder and lightning and winds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Surrounds the earth</td>
<td>Seas pour in different directions, and swell in the winds</td>
<td>4 mythic directional Winds (each has own path so they don't tear the world apart)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Solid ground weighed down by its own mass</td>
<td>Valleys sink and Mountains rise</td>
<td>Split into same 5 zones as the sky (too cold —&gt; temperate —&gt; too hot —&gt; temperate —&gt; too cold)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7**

Mapping the Natural-Philosophic/Empedoclean Elements of Creation in Ovid

By reading Figure 7 from left to right, it is evident how Ovid's cosmogony is heavily structured around the 4 Empedoclean elements. The primordial universe was singular in nature, it had "unus [...] vultus" ("one face", 1.6), full of the tangled and confused "semina rerum" ("seeds of the universe", 1.9), which are finally "diremit" ("divided", 1.21) by a "deus" ("god", 1.21), who remains anonymous. Although this "deus" is referred to as the "opifex rerum" ("workman of the universe", 1.79), his role in Ovid's cosmogony is minimal, particularly when
compared to the role of Marduk and P's Elohim. In order to create the universe in the Enuma Elish Marduk physically "sliced [Tiamat] in half" (Tablet IV page 255) and fastened her body parts into place with "the cosmic bond" (Tablet V page 257). Meanwhile, Elohim's voice and command is not only the driving force behind the creative separation in Genesis 1-2:4a, He also creates certain features ex nihilo, and therefore is integral through the creation story. On the other hand, Ovid's cosmogony is fairly hands-off. While the deus "secrevit" ("separated", 1.23) out the various elements from the jumbled mess of Chaos, there is an emphasis on how the deus really "exemit" ("freed", 1.24) the elements from the heap of Chaos.

Once the elements have been "evolvit" ("unfurled", 1.24) and "exemit" ("freed", 1.24), the creator deus recedes from the narrative, and the elements themselves become the subjects of the verbs of separation. First we see a "ignea [...] vis" ("fiery power", 1.26) leap out to the "convexi [...] caeli" ("vault of heaven", 1.26-27) because it was a power that was "sine pondere" ("weightless", 1.26). The physical property of the "ignea [...] vis" (1.26) is the driving force behind its movement: because fire is the lightest of the four Empedoclean elements, it moves to its rightful zone at the summit of the sky of its own accord once it has been freed. The same applies to "aër" ("air", 1.28), which was "proximus" ("next", 1.28) to fire in terms of "levitate" ("lightness", 1.28), or density, and therefore also next in terms of "locu" ("location", 1.28) within spatial plane of creation. The same then follows for "densior [...] tellus" ("denser earth", 1.29), and finally "umor" ("liquid", 1.30) flowing around it all. As the cosmogony progresses, the physical properties, specifically densities, are brought up over and over, informing the positioning of each newly differentiated element. As Figure 7 demonstrates, these four basic elements are each further differentiated, with each layer becoming increasingly specific, but still following the principles of natural-philosophy in the way they organize themselves.
It is fascinating to see how Ovid casts the *deus*, supposedly the "*opifex rerum*
("workman of the universe", 1.79), as a mere facilitator of creation: his role is simply to gently untangle the elements from the heap of Chaos, and allow those elements to organizes themselves based on their inherent elemental properties. With these physical properties acting as such a strong force of separation, thus creating the universe, one wonders why Ovid includes the anonymous *deus* at all. We have already established that Ovid packs his creation account with overtly atomistic language to allude to Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, which scholars have suggested is a ploy to refute Lucretius' assertions about Lucretius' strict naturalism. It appears that Ovid's inclusion of the *deus* builds upon this refutation. It is satisfyingly ironic to have a *deus*, a supernatural figure, act as the catalyst of a highly naturalistic process, particularly considering Lucretius' own arguments *against* the intervention of the gods in the physical reality in which we live.

**The Spatial-Temporal Structure of Creation**

All of the above-examined texts include the narrative functions of an occupied primordial space and separation as creation, though each text approaches these functions with slight alterations and idiosyncrasies. Unlike Hesiod's conception of Chaos as an empty abyss, the Priestly account, the *Enuma Elish*, and the *Metamorphoses*, all conceive the pre-creation universe as filled or partially filled with the raw material of the universe, which will later be

---

243 In *De Rerum Natura*, Lucretius drew heavily upon Empedocles (see footnote ##) and the atomistic ideas of figures such as Democritus. His aim was to demonstrate that the supernatural gods were not as heavily involved in daily human reality as most people at the time thought. He posited a purely naturalistic view of the universe and events in human life. For more on the interaction between Ovid and Lucretius see Sara K. Myers, "Cosmogonic Metamorphosis and Natural Philosophy in the *Metamorphosis,*" in *Ovid's Causes: Cosmogony and Aetiology in the Metamorphoses* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 27-60.
molded into the cosmos that we can recognize today. While each individual text's conception of the primordial universe is integral to the motion of the narrative, the motif of separation as creation is constant across all three texts. And it is not arbitrary acts of separation either, but very intentional and ordered acts of separation with an inherent structure.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differentiation Structure</th>
<th>Genesis 1-2:4</th>
<th>Metamorphoses</th>
<th>Enuma Elish</th>
<th>Spatial Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illogic/Chaos/Primordial Universe</td>
<td>Earth is &quot;unformed and void&quot;. Darkness. Mass of water. tehom</td>
<td>Chaos: All elements jumbled into one homogenous mass. Opposite elements fighting each other.</td>
<td>Tiamat: A vengeful, violent, chaotic female water deity who wants to destroy the gods.</td>
<td>Higher Spatial Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process of Separation</td>
<td>Elohim creates Light and separates it from Darkness (Day and Night).</td>
<td>Waves from Land from Dense Air from Light Ether</td>
<td>In the sky Marduk establishes several temples and shrines</td>
<td>Separate and move downwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fiery power is lightest and highest, then air, then dense earth, then water flowing around it.</td>
<td>Marduk puts stars and constellations for the gods in the sky, which also delineate time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elohim creates an Expanse to separate Upper Waters (Sky) from Lower Waters.</td>
<td>Water: Seas poured in all directions, various bodies of water than interconnect and flow together or into the earth.</td>
<td>Marduk creates the moon, which also delineates time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elohim separates the Lower Waters from the Dry Land (Sea and Earth). Elohim creates Vegetation (Life).</td>
<td>Earth: Geographic formations, foliage (life). 5 temperature zones created.</td>
<td>Marduk creates weather phenomena from Tiamat's spittle and poison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elohim puts Lights in the Expanse to separate Night and Day (Moon and Sun). God creates the Stars.</td>
<td>Fire: Stars in heaven shine out</td>
<td>Marduk makes mountains on her &quot;udder&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elohim creates Birds (Sky animals) and Fish/Sea Monsters (Water animals).</td>
<td>Water, Land, and Air inhabited by animals</td>
<td>Marduk fixes everything in place, props up the sky with Tiamat's thigh.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elohim creates Land animals. Elohim creates Humans (intellectual, superior, Elohim-like Land animals).</td>
<td>Human created. More divine, more intelligent, and master of other animals. Look to heavens (gods?) and stars instead of ground (demonstrates intellectual/philosophical curiosity)</td>
<td>Marduk creates humanity from the remains of a traitorous god. Humanity are lower than gods. Humanity do the labor of the gods. Humanity makes sacrifices to the gods.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elohim stops work and rests.</td>
<td>Earth is changed, earth no longer unformed, but can be conceptualized by human thought.</td>
<td>The gods are relieved of their labor, and receive sacrifices that benefit them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 8**

Mapping the Structure of Creation Across Texts
There are, in fact, two overarching structures that overlay the movement of all three creation texts: the spatial movement and the process of logical organizing. The right hand column of Figure 8 maps the spatial movement of creation, which begins with the creation of the heavens and sky first, and moves downward to the earth in all three texts. The *Enuma Elish's* creation story moves from a celestial space to an earthly space in one linear motion, but both the Priestly creation story and the *Metamorphoses* creation story move from celestial space down to earthly space twice. This repetition of the spatial orientation in Genesis 1-2:4a and the *Metamorphoses* appears to be due to the theme of expansion that they share. Figure 1 demonstrates for the Priestly account, and Figure 8 demonstrates for Ovid's account, the theme of expansion and complication through separation. In the Priestly account Elohim separates out broad categories of the created universe in the first set of Days 1-3, and then goes back and adds complexity to those broad categories through further differentiation on Days 4-6, and thus must return to the celestial space and work his way down to an earthly space once again. Similarly, in Ovid's account the "moles" ("mass", 1.7) of Chaos first separates out into "ignea [...] vis" ("a fiery power", 1.26), "aëř" ("air", 1.28), "densior [...] tellus" ("denser earth", 1.29), and "circumfluus umor" ("the liquid flowing around", 1.30), or the four Empedoclean elements, before once again differentiating into specific instantiations of each element.

Regardless of the repeated spatial movement in Genesis 1-2:4a and the *Metamorphoses*, all three texts begin with the creation of celestial space first, either sky or heaven. In the *Enuma Elish*, Marduk initially uses the first half of Tiamat's body to make the sky, while in the *Metamorphoses* fire shoots up to the summit of the sky and the denser air separates from the lighter ether, and in Genesis Elohim creates Light and Day and the waters above which become the sky. In the case of Ovid's creation story, the separation of the "semina rerum" ("seeds of the
universe" 1.9) is driven by the inherent physical properties of the four Empedoclean elements, so it makes sense that he would track creation in this spatial layout since it aligns perfectly with the perceived densities of each element. With regards to the Enuma Elish and Genesis, however, starting with the celestial space seems to have some connection with its status as home of the gods. As soon as Marduk has situated the first half of Tiamat's body as the sky, he establishes temples and shrines to various gods, while Elohim establishes the great expanse to separate the waters, which eventually becomes his fortress and divine sanctuary.244

This spatial layout is not, however, the only structural overlay that is shared among all three texts. There is also a movement from the chaotic and illogical primordial universe, through the process of separation (and creation), to a created world or logic, order, and intelligence. This appears most clearly in the Metamorphoses, as Ovid describes primordial Chaos as "rudis indigestaque" ("rough and disordered", 1.7), "instabilis" ("unstable", 1.16), and a "caeco [...] acervo" ("a confused heap", 1.24). This language paints a clear picture of a universe that is fuzzy and jumbled, and without a clearly defined outline. Yet, as the deus starts to untangle the "semina rerum" ("seeds of the universe", 1.9), and the elements are "ligavit" ("fastened", 1.25) into their respective places, the elements settle into a "concordi pace" ("harmonious peace", 1.25). The process of differentiation and separation continues, as the elements settle into place and the form of the universe comes into focus. The natural-philosophic principles that drive the separations and organization of Ovid's cosmogony suggest that the move from Chaos was almost inevitable, that it was the natural state of the elements when not bound up in a "moles" ("mass", 1.7). Once the physical elements are sorted out into a logical order, the universe is ready to bring living creatures into being. The "sanctius" ("more divine", 1.76) of these creatures was "homo"

244 Smith, The Priestly Vision, 14.
("mankind", 1.78), the capstone of creation, and the peak of "mentis [...] altae" ("profound thought", 1.76); naturally concluding a shift from Chaos to logic and intelligence.

The Priestly creation account follows a similar course, though P is less explicit in moving from "Chaos" (Ovid 1.7) to humans, the creature "sanctius" ("more divine", 1.76) than all others. The Priestly primordial universe consists of tehom ("the deep" Gen 1:2) and "darkness" (Gen 1:2), and is described as "being unformed and void" (Gen 1:2).245 The imagery of the Priestly creation story is more symbolic in its shift from chaos to order. Once Elohim begins the process of creation and separation, the first thing that He creates is light (Gen 1:3), which He separates from the primordial darkness. Fitting with the divine wisdom model of creation, Elohim's intervention with the universe brings wisdom, enlightenment, and light to the universe (with order and logic to follow), which had previously been dark, disordered, and, one can extrapolate, illogical. This is a similar concept as is found in the Metamorphoses, since Ovid describes the chaotic primordial mass as "caeco" (1.24), which can mean "confused", but can also be translated as "blind", which carries undercurrents and connotations of physical darkness. From this point, Elohim continues on to create and differentiate, increasing the level of complexity present in the universe, until he creates humans. Humans are the last of all creatures to be created; they are also the only creatures that are made "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27) and

---

245 This is a translation of the terms tohû and bohû that is colored by later Christian conceptions of creation ex nihilo. tohû, however, actually means something closer to "wilderness" or "wasteland", but usually not emptiness. See: Koehler and Baumgartner, Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon, 1689.1 While, bohû is always seen with tohû, and is also "partly assimilated to it" through a "rhyming formation". See Koehler and Baumgartner, Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon, 111. Israel Knohl expands upon the understanding of tohû and bohû stating, "we cannot interpret tohu v'vohu as a designation for formless matter, as it is often interpreted; rather, it is a reference to some primordial entity that preceded divine creation and that was used in that process. Elsewhere in the Bible, he word tohu means 'desert,' 'waste,' 'devastation,' and this is also its meaning here." See: Israel Knohl, The Divine Symphony: The Bible's Many Voices (Jewish Publication Society, 2003), 12.
given dominion over all of creation. In this way, P signals that humans are the pinnacle of intelligence, the capstone of the created order, thus the natural end point in the move from illogical *tehom* and darkness (Gen 1:2) to the logic and intelligence of the created universe.

The movement from chaos to logic is not quite as structured in the *Enuma Elish*, but is instead more holistic when looking at the creation episode as a whole. It is also more fraught with gender dynamics and value judgments than the two previously examined texts. The chaotic element at the beginning of the *Enuma Elish*, is animate and embodied in the form of the water goddess Tiamat. As Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate, Tiamat carries a sequence of homologies, namely that she is a watery, female figure whose body has undefined limits, who is angry, deceptive, and, ultimately, chaotic. This set of associations, which seems to exist within the gendered imagination of the Babylonian people, informs the author's choice to represent primordial chaos as an embodied goddess. In contrast to this chaotic female figure who threatens the existence of the gods, we have Marduk, who is hyper-masculine in the portrayal of his character as the ultimate warrior, deity, and monarch. Only Marduk, the pinnacle of the divine warrior motif, possesses the power to defeat Tiamat. Once he has subdued this chaotic female element, he dismembers her and "created marvels" (Tablet IV page 255) using her body as the raw material of the cosmos. As Marduk continues to divide her body, transforming them into different features of creation and building the cosmos, as demonstrated in Figures 6 and 8, he gains an increasing amount of control over her body. As you read from top to bottom in Figure 8, Marduk is not only constructing the space of the universe, he is controlling the amorphous and the chaotic female aspects of reality, in the form of Tiamat's nebulous body, positioning them around the borders of the cosmos, like a bubble, ultimately creating a logical and ordered created

---

246 See page 155 footnote 247 for lexicographical information.
space. This particular movement not only shifts the reader from chaos to order, but also from female to male, binaries which are purposely related in this text.

**EXAMINING THE FUNCTION OF ANTHROPOGONY WITHIN CREATION**

We have demonstrated in Figure 8 that in all three creation stories examined above the creation of humanity is the final step in the process of constructing the universe, and is often conveyed as the capstone of creation. While the placement of the anthropogony event is nearly identical across all three texts, each is an individual event unto itself, rife with significance, and firmly situated with the larger movement, tone, and model of each respective creation story. By examining each narrative function of the anthropogony episode within the larger story of creation, it is easier to see how the creation of humanity fits within the larger trajectory of each text.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Function</th>
<th>P Source</th>
<th>Enuma Elish</th>
<th>Ovid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Animals</td>
<td>Elohim makes sea and sky animals on the 5th day. Elohim makes land animals on the 6th day (same day as humans).</td>
<td>To increase the gods' amazement of Marduk. To take up the work of the gods.</td>
<td>The earth accepts animals created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation for Anthropogony</td>
<td>To rule the earth and its animals</td>
<td>To increase the gods' amazement of Marduk. To take up the work of the gods.</td>
<td>To think. To rule the other animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material of Anthropogony</td>
<td>Blood and bone. The corpse of the traitorous god Qingu.</td>
<td>Either from the divine seed or from mud that still had elements of the sky in it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form of Humanity</td>
<td>The image of Elohim. Male and female.</td>
<td>If made of mud, the likeness of the gods.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Function of Humanity</td>
<td>To populate the earth. To rule the earth and the creatures that live there.</td>
<td>To do the work that the gods had done, so that the gods can rest. To make sacrifices to the gods using the fruits of their labor.</td>
<td>To think. To change the face of the earth. To rule the other animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisions for Humanity</td>
<td>Given vegetation for food by Elohim.</td>
<td>Other animals have to look at the ground, but humans have elevated faces that look at the heavens and the stars.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of Humans and the rest of Creation</td>
<td>Humans rule the rest of creation. Yet still an animal, part of creation.</td>
<td>Humans physically and philosophically change the earth. More divine and intellectually capable than other creatures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of Humans and Divine</td>
<td>Humans as Elohim's earthly proxies, but humans still dependent on Elohim.</td>
<td>Humans as the gods' slave-laborers. Humans definitely lower than the gods.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest for God(s)</td>
<td>Elohim rests after humans are created (final act of creation). The 7th day.</td>
<td>Gods rest after humans take over their work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9**

Mapping the Narrative Functions of Anthropogony Episodes
The oldest text examined in the chapter, the *Enuma Elish*, describes an anthropogony that is rather gruesome in comparison to the anthropogonies found in the Priestly and Ovidian accounts. The chief Babylonian god Marduk decides to "set up primeval man" (Tablet VI page 260), and plans to do so by "put[ting] blood together, and mak[ing] bones too" (Tablet VI page 260), which will be used as the raw material for humanity's creation. Ea, another Babylonian god, advises Marduk to "let one [of the gods] who is hostile to them [the other gods] be surrendered (up), let him be destroyed, and let people be created (from him)" (Tablet VI page 261). The rebellious god chosen is Qingu "who started the war, [...] who incited Tiamat and gathered an army" (Tablet VI page 261): the rest of the gods judge him, and "cut off his blood" (Tablet VI page 261), from which Ea "created mankind" (Tablet VI page 261). In the Babylonian conception, then, humanity is created not only *by* the gods, but *out of* a god. Just as the body of Tiamat, a primordial water deity, is the raw material used to create the cosmos earlier in the *Enuma Elish*, the body of her right hand man and a fellow god, Qingu, is used as the raw material to create humanity. Considering the manner in which the cosmos was just constructed, from the dismembered body parts of a dead Tiamat, this method of anthropogony is quite in line with the structure and themes of the overall narrative.

This rather graphic anthropogony contrasts sharply with that of the Priestly account in Genesis 1-2:4. On the sixth day of the Priestly creation Elohim announces his intention to "make man in our image" (Gen 1:26),\(^{247}\) and then does so, with his word and intention having enough power to bring any created element into being, as we find throughout the Priestly account.

---

\(^{247}\) This is a translation of the term *ṣelem*, which Benjamin D. Sommer notes refers "to the physical contours of God", and more specifically "to visible, concrete representations of physical objects" in an ancient Semitic context. See: Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 69.
Unlike the anthropogony in the *Enuma Elish*, P's anthropogony is brief, and does not allude to any physical violence or divine flesh-based beginnings for his anthropogony. Without the direct and tangible connection of flesh as the basis for any divine-human relationship as we see in the *Enuma Elish*, P must find some way to demonstrate the connection between Elohim and humans. Rather than forming humans from the body of a god, P's Elohim forms humanity "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27). What is interesting is that while humanity in the Priestly account is not as directly connected to the divine as it is in the *Enuma Elish*, humanity seems to hold a higher status in the Priestly account.

Throughout the course of Genesis 1, we see a progression of creation that culminates in the creation of humanity, which Phyllis A. Bird suggests, P sees as the "crowning species" of creation.248 Humanity is not only the culmination of the act of creation, but is also the pinnacle of creation as Elohim made humans to "rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth" (Gen 1:26), essentially every other living thing that had been previously created. That humanity is made "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27) in the Priestly account "serves here to validate and explain the status and role of *adam* among other creatures".249 that role being to "master" (Gen 1:28) the earth, serving "as God's own special representative"250 and "rule [...] the whole earth" (Gen 1:26). This is a sharp divergence from the role of humanity, and the conception of the human-divine relationship, in the *Enuma Elish*. Despite the fact that humanity is made of the actual blood of a god in the *Enuma Elish* (Tablet VI page 261) — which would suggest a closer relationship with the divine

---

249 Phyllis A. Bird, "'Male and Female He Created Them'," 339.
250 Ibid.
— humanity holds no privileged position within creation, and has no special relationship with the gods.

There are several clues to the devalued status of humanity in the *Enuma Elish*, one such being the status of the god whose body serves as the raw material for humanity's creation. When Marduk expresses his inclination to "put blood together, and make bones too" (Tablet VI page 260) to create humanity, Ea suggests that they use the body of a god "who is hostile" (Tablet VI page 261). They use the body of Qingu "who started the war" and "who incited Tiamat and gathered an army" (Tablet VI page 261), accusations that paint Qingu as more than just "hostile", but as a traitor. It is "his blood" (Tablet VI page 261) from which Ea "created mankind" (Tablet VI page 261), and perhaps because of this the gods "imposed the toil of the gods on them [humans]" (Tablet VI page 261): the low traitorous status of Qingu seems too purposeful to be coincidental in regards to the low status of humanity. Beyond this, however, the motivation for creating humanity and their function, once created, in the *Enuma Elish* is very different from the Priestly account, as Figure 9 illustrates. After he created the cosmos, the rest of the Babylonian gods are in awe of Marduk, and they praise his sovereignty and power (Tablet V page 259-60). Upon hearing this Marduk "made up his mind to perform miracles" (Tablet VI page 261). Essentially, Marduk hopes to continue impressing the gods and meeting the bar he has set with his act of creation, he thus decides "to set up primeval man" so that "the work of the gods shall be imposed (on him), and so they [the gods] shall be at leisure" (Tablet VI page 261).

You can see very clearly in Figure 9 that the role of humanity, the whole reason they were created, in the *Enuma Elish* diverges sharply from what is found in Genesis 1. While P's God creates humanity almost as a proxy ruler on earth, awarding humanity a special role and a higher status because of that proxy ruler function, Marduk creates humanity purely to relieve the
gods of their work, "released" (Tablet VI page 261) the gods of their labor. Even the one role of humanity, to "bring [their, the gods,] regular offerings" (Tablet V page 260), which might suggest some sort of special human-divine relationship, is purely for the benefit of the gods who expect man to "toil" for the benefit of the gods (Tablet V page 260). In the Enuma Elish, humans labor not only to relieve the gods of their work, but also to bring offerings to the gods — they serve a purely servile function, and therefore have no particular relationship with the divine. On the other hand, P's Elohim does not require humans to labor as He gave humans "every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit [...] for food" (Gen 1:29), providing for their every need on top of endowing humanity with a special, elevated status.

The contrast between the function and treatment of humanity by the respective creating deities suggests a certain relationship of dependency between the human and divine. The designated function of humanity in the Enuma Elish, in particular, demonstrates that the gods have a fairly high level of dependence on humanity, despite humanity's clearly inferior position. Although humanity is formed from the spilled blood of a god "who is hostile" (Tablet VI page 261), and "toil" (Tablet V page 260), this function of humanity allows that "[the gods] shall be at leisure" (Tablet VI page 261) by doing "the toil of the gods" (Tablet VI page 261). In other words, humanity is created to relieve the gods of their labor, labor that is presumably necessary, and to present the products of that labor to the gods (Tablet V page 260). Without humanity, the Babylonian gods would lose their laborers, and in so doing, they would lose the sacrifices of the fruits of that labor — the loss of humanity, despite their lowly status, would be a huge detriment.

---

251 This contrasts with the purpose of humanity in the Yahwistic Genesis 2. After Yahweh has created the Garden of Eden, and has created man, He "placed [man] in the garden of Eden, to till it and tend it" (Gen 2:15, emphasis added). Here, Yahweh explicitly states that man's purpose is to work, which is the opposite of what we see in Genesis 1:29.
to the gods.\textsuperscript{252} This fact demonstrates the necessity of humanity for the gods' way of life, the
dependence upon humanity that Elohim does not exhibit.

In fact, the relationship between humankind and Elohim in the Priestly anthropogony is
just the opposite, with humanity's dependence on Elohim emphasized despite humanity's special
status. In this respect, humanity's special status as Elohim's proxies who are made "in the image
of God" (Gen 1:27) and are intended to "rule [...] the whole earth" (Gen 1:26) is undermined. Not
undermined exactly, but more so, P reminds us that although humanity is above other living
things and has a special relationship with the divine, humanity is nonetheless still a part of
Elohim's creation, and as such is dependent upon Elohim. Bird notes that one of P's main
concerns in the Priestly creation account is "to emphasize the dependence of all of creation on
God".\textsuperscript{253} In order to do so, P must counteract the elevated status granted to humanity by being
created "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27) and being told to "master [...] and rule" (Gen 1:28) the
earth, and demonstrate to the reader that humanity is just like any other element of creation. P
serves this reminder almost immediately upon humanity's creation. Even though humanity is
marked as special by being created "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27), this is immediately hedged
because Elohim also made them "male and female" (Gen 1:27).

Bird observes that though these characterizations of humanity are both essential, they are
"distinct statements about the nature of humanity" because Elohim transcends sexual
distinction.\textsuperscript{254} Therefore, though humanity is given the likeness of Elohim, the equation goes no
further — humans are differentiated as male and female, and commanded to "be fertile and

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{252} In fact, it does become quite the detriment to the gods in the story of the great flood, in which
all of humanity is eradicated, and the gods realize after it is too late that without humanity, no
one will burn sacrifices to please them.\textsuperscript{253} Phyllis A. Bird, "'Male and Female He Created Them'," 337.
\textsuperscript{254} Ibid., 349.}
increase" (Gen 1:28) just as all the other creatures are commanded. Upon closer inspection P appears to characterize humanity more as animal than like Elohim throughout the entire anthropogony episode. Humanity is created on the sixth day of creation, the very same day that "God made wild beasts of every kind and cattle of every kind, and all kinds of creeping things on the earth" (Gen 1:25). In doing so, P suggests that although humanity "is to be understood as a special type or species of earth creature", they are nonetheless to be understood as animals, even if they are an amplification or specification of the more broadly classed animals previously created. Once P has firmly situated humanity within the realm of the rest of creation, the implication of humanity's dependence on Elohim naturally follows due to the emphasis throughout the creation account "of all of creation on God".

While the function of humanity and the divine-human relationship in the anthropogonies of the Enuma Elish and Genesis 1 are effectively opposites of each other, the anthropogony found in Ovid's Metamorphoses closely parallels the Priestly anthropogony. Ovid actually presents two different possible anthropogony theories, hedging his narration by stating humans were created "sive [...] sive" ("whether [...] or", 1.78-80), a grammatical construction that presents the reader with two potential options. In this case, Ovid tells the reader that humanity was either made by "opifex rerum, mundi melioris origo" ("the workman of the universe, the originator of a better world", 1.79) from the "divino semine" ("divine seed", 1.78), or by Prometheus, who "finxit [illa] in effigiem moderantum cuncta deorum" ("molded [them] in the image of the all-governing gods", 1.83) using "recens tellus" ("fresh earth", 1.80) that was only

---

255 It is interesting to note that this phrasing is repeated essentially verbatim after the cessation of the Priestly flood story in Genesis 9:1, an episode that functions as a sort of second creation story after a return to a chaotic, almost primordial, state.

256 Phyllis A. Bird, "'Male and Female He Created Them'," 347.

257 Ibid., 337.
recently differentiated and retained "cognati [...] semina caeli" ("the seeds of the related heavens", 1.81). While the former is in keeping with the mechanics of the rest of the creation account, and the latter looks ahead to the more polytheistic episodes in the poem, both potential anthropogonies overlap in some way with the Priestly anthropogony, as Figure 9 demonstrates.

The first Ovidian anthropogony claims humans were created by an "opifex rerum" ("workman of the universe", 1.79), who appears throughout the poem as the architect and craftsman of creation. The characterization of this unnamed Ovidian god situates him in close proximity to P's Elohim who acts as orchestrator of creation and separation throughout Genesis 1. The "opifex rerum" (1.79) edges closer to Elohim through the epithet "mundi melioris origo" ("originator of a better world", 1.79), which is highly reminiscent of Elohim's assessment of each new aspect of creation as "good" throughout Genesis 1. Although the "opifex rerum" (1.79) of the first Ovidian anthropogony more closely aligns with the Elohim of Genesis, it is the creative actions of Prometheus in the second Ovidian account that more closely parallel those of Elohim. While the "opifex rerum" (1.79) creates humanity from "divino semine" ("the divine seed", 1.78), Prometheus "finxit" ("molded", 1.83) humanity in "effigiem moderantum cuncta deorum" ("image of the all-governing gods", 1.83), which Figure 9 demonstrates is a clear overlap with the Priestly description of Elohim creating humans "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27). 258 Just as the god-like form denotes a special status in the Priestly anthropogony, so too does it differentiate humanity as different in the Ovidian account.

In spite of Ovid's direct allusion to the overtly polytheistic figure of Prometheus, this second anthropogony account continues to closely parallel the Priestly account. Ovid situates the

---

258 It is also interesting to note that Ovid states that Prometheus created humans from "recens tellus" ("fresh earth", 1.80), which parallels the Yahwistic anthropogony that claims "the Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth" (Gen 2:7).
anthropogony, however it may have occurred, within the context of the creation of life as a
whole, just as P does. While P has Elohim create all land creatures on the same day He creates
humans as a way of putting them all in the same general category, Ovid first discusses how
"cesserunt nitidis habitandae piscibus undae, / terra feras cepit, volucres agitabilis aër" ("the
waves granted [themselves] for the purpose of habitation to shining fish, the land received wild
beasts, winged things easily moved [through] the air", 1.74-75), before immediately observing
that "sanctius his animal mentisque capacius altae / deerat adhuc" ("a creature more divine than
these and more competent of profound intellect was lacking at this point", 1.76-77). Just as P's
Elohim creates humans "male and female" (Gen 1:27), and thus like other animals, Ovid refers to
humans as an "animal" ("creature", 1.76), which can be translated more literally as "animal",
even if he does tack on the caveat of "sanctius his" ("more divine than these", 1.76). In the
Prometheus-based anthropogony, however, Ovid places humanity in direct comparison with
other animals, stating that humanity had an "os [...] sublime" ("elevated face", 1.85) as opposed
to the other "prone [...] animalia" ("prone animals", 1.84) who "spectent [...] terram" ("look at
the ground", 1.84). In this Ovidian account, Prometheus not only gives humans the forms of
gods, but also faces that are "sublime" (1.85), which can mean "elevated" (i.e. not looking at the
ground). This can also mean "exalted", which suggests a special status like that granted to
humans in Genesis 1.

Just as this special status as Elohim's proxies in Genesis 1 allows humanity to "rule [...] the
whole earth" (Gen 1:26), the increased divinity (1.76), the more spacious intellect (1.76), and
the elevated faces that "caelum videre" ("look at the heavens", 1.85) allow Ovidian humanity
"dominari in cetera" ("to be master over the rest", 1.77) of the animals. As is evident in Figure 9,
this motivation is a fairly direct parallel to the motivation for the anthropogony in the Priestly
account. Ovid does not make any mention of humanity being forced into servitude under the
gods, nor do the Greco-Roman gods become dependent upon this new, intelligent creature. In
fact, the Ovidian anthropogony does not establish much of relationship between humanity and
the divine at all when held in comparison to the *Enuma Elish* or the Priestly account. The only
hint that we get is the "*os [...] sublime*" ("elevated face", 1.85), which humans use "*videre
caelum*" ("to see the heavens", 1.85), an action that could suggest a reverence for the gods or
their creator on the part of humanity. This is not the only thing that humanity does with its
upturned face however, they also "*ad sidera tollere [illa]*" ("lift [them] to the stars", 1.86). This
action, especially when combined with the emphasis on the fact that humanity is "*mentis
capacius altae*" ("more competent of profound intellect", 1.76), suggests a curiosity about the
natural world on the part of humanity, which shifts closer to Lucretian naturalism than anything
else.

The special relationship that Ovid truly underlines is between humanity and "*tellus*" ("the
earth", 1.87), rather than the gods. Before humanity was created the "*tellus*" (1.87) was "*rudis et
tsine imagine*" ("undeveloped and without appearance", 1.87), but the earth "*conversa*
("changed", 1.88) when it "*induit ignotas hominum [...] figuras*" ("covered [itself] with the
unfamiliar figures of humans", 1.88). In the last lines of his creation story, Ovid states that it is
the "*tellus*" (1.87) that is "*conversa*" (1.88) by the creation "*hominum*" ("of humans", 1.88). The
*deus*" ("god", 1.21) who is the "*opifex rerum*" ("workman of the universe", 1.79) and potential
creator of humanity fades away within the narrative, does not declare a day "holy" (Gen 2:3)
when he "ceased from all the work of creation" (Gen 2:3) as P's Elohim does, and does not
condemn humanity to "toil" (Tablet V page 260) and to "bring [the gods'] regular offerings"
(Tablet V page 260) as a sacrifice to them as does Marduk. The aftermath of humanity's creation
in the *Metamorphoses* has a more philosophical implication, as the earth was "sine imagine" ("not yet conceivable", 1.87) before humanity, but covered itself with the "hominum [...] figuras" ("rhetorical figures of humans", 1.88). The creation of humanity, a species "mentis capacius altae" ("more capable of profound intellect", 1.76), allows the earth to be thought about, to become a conceivable notion or idea, thus forever "conversa" ("changed", 1.88). In neither of the other creation stories is this case — where Genesis 1 and the *Enuma Elish* both situate humanity within the rest of creation and in direct relation to themselves, Ovid chooses to shift our focus away from the relationship between mortal and divine, despite the fact that the mortal-divine relationship is inescapable throughout the remainder of the 15-book poem, instead focusing on the relationship between humans and the earth, the natural world.

**Conclusion**

Each narrative function examined in this chapter revealed a new level of holistic meaning and significance for its parent text. It has become evident throughout the course of this chapter that these creation stories are highly intertextual, often purposefully so, as is the case with Ovid's interaction with both Hesiod's and Lucretius' work, and possibly P's relationship with the Babylonian creation epic. The various conceptions of the primordial world, the structure and actions of creation, and the anthropogony episodes in each text were particularly illuminating narrative functions that offered up fascinating thematic convergences as well as motivic inversion and negation. These nuanced similarities and highly intentional differences would not have become evident without the tabular maps that compared each text's structure side by side. Through this structuralist, text focused approach, I did not have to rely on the philological connection between *tehom* and Tiamat in order to compare the Priestly and Babylonian creation
stories, nor did I have to depend upon the potential for cultural contact during the Exile as a foothold into the comparative conversation. Despite the vast chasm that stretches between the ancient Near East and Classical Rome, I was able to enrich my understanding of the Ovidian creation story within the Metamorphoses through comparison with the Enuma Elish and Priestly stories. I was also able to better understand the relationship between the Enuma Elish and Genesis 1-2:4a through a study of Ovid's interactions with both Hesiod and Lucretius within his poem.

The salient point to take away from this comparative analysis, aside from the merits of the process itself, is that regardless of any author's awareness of or interaction with another text, what is so fascinating is how each author renegotiated and manipulated the existing set of narrative functions to serve their own ideological ends. Narrative functions in and of themselves are neutral, they have no meaning in isolation. It is the particular combinations, inversions, negations, and absences of the narrative functions, the way that each functions in relation to its own narrative and intertextually, that imbues it, and the larger work, with meaning. By breaking down each of these creation narratives into their component narrative functions and observing the synchronic and diachronic relational web that ran within and between these texts, the structuring principles of each text became clearer. The authors of the Enuma Elish, the Metamorphoses, and Genesis 1 each purposefully shape their respective texts around the specific structuring models discussed above: the Enuma Elish centers on corporeality, Genesis 1 on the Priestly system of divisions, and Ovid on both the tradition of Greco-Roman poetry and Lucretian natural philosophy. Through the manipulation of the narrative functions, each author is able to create a creation narrative that is at once both recognizable as such, and is also separate, unique, and ideologically informed.
CONCLUSION

At the outset of this project, I was interested in the three themes as they appeared in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. I noticed several thematic, motivic, and narrative similarities between the *Metamorphoses* and the Biblical Book of Genesis, but in my initial study I ran into the problem of historiography. The parallels I noticed were compelling enough to catalyze the undertaking of this comparative project, despite the fact that several of the texts were otherwise unrelated, and broadening the scope of my research allowed me to more directly address the question of method. This initial interest evolved into a series of close line-by-line analyses and comparisons of the texts at hand, though these were mainly descriptive in character. As I began to take an increasingly close look at the structure of, and interactions between, these various texts, the complex and nuanced web of connections became more apparent. While these texts initially lent themselves to comparison due to their similarities, as I began to understand their underlying structures and isolated the various narrative functions within each text, the differences between the texts, and between their employments of the identified narrative functions, became the most interesting aspect of my study. As Bruce Lincoln so insightfully observes, "all knowledge, indeed all intelligibility, thus derives from consideration of data whose differences become instructive and revealing when set against the similarities that render them comparable".259 A close examination led to the realization that while several texts may appear similar at a motivic and structural level, such as those that recount creation or a flood event, they can actually differ widely.

Still more interesting is that these differences were not arbitrary. Through an immersive textual comparison, and the employment of my abstracted, structuralist schema, it became

259 Lincoln, "Theses on Comparison," 121.
increasingly apparent that each text was structured via different apparatuses, which could be external social, cultural, ideological, intertextual forces, among others. The pointed comparison of narrative functions is necessary to strike a balance between observing the similar and the almost randomly different that permeate such a collection of texts. By studying each narrative function both synchronically and diachronically, the comparativist can better understand each instantiation of a particular function, which, in turn, augments our understanding of how that function fits into the larger context of its respective narrative. This process shines a light on the various ways that a text can maintain, invert, pervert, alter, negate, or erase a particular function, and in so doing, a purposeful structural patterning comes into focus. It becomes quite clear that each author organizes and manipulates the component narrative functions, which are essentially the building blocks of myths, to meet some external criteria, whether that be cultural, ideological, or otherwise.

In this thesis I applied the above technique to three specific cases studies: hospitality narratives, flood narratives, and creation narratives, all of which are common themes in ancient mythological literature. Chapter one looked at hospitality narratives in Genesis 19, Judges 19, and Liber VIII of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This chapter examined the way that each episode presented narrative functions, such as the opposition of locals, the morality of what each host was willing to sacrifice, and the nature of the related transformational scene. This examination began to reveal a relational pattern between the morality of hosts and guests, and the larger motive of the episode. Each instantiation of a hospitality episode was structured around a separate external force. Ovid purposefully crafts an unambiguous episode because the story of Philemon and Baucis serves as an internal didactic, while also alluding to one of the larger themes of metamorphosis within the *Metamorphoses*. 
Chapter two approached flood narratives in a similar manner, looking again at Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as well as Genesis 6-9, and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Through the examination of several narrative functions in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the Pentateuchal J source, the interplay between more epic mythic themes and the demands of monotheism in J became more apparent. Conversely, the comparison the Biblical J and P versions of the flood revealed the Priestly author's preoccupation with creating a consistent, cohesive, and continuous narrative history of Israel's cult, while maintaining more epic mythic themes like the flood narrative. A final comparison between both Genesis sources and the Ovidian flood demonstrates the attitude of each text's deities toward the morality of each respective survivor, as well as the interaction between flood narratives and creation stories.

Chapter three, then analyzed the creation narratives found in the *Enuma Elish*, Genesis 1-2:4a, several Biblical psalms, and the *Metamorphoses*. The comparison of numerous narrative functions, such as the conception of the primordial world, the organization and order of creation, and the anthropogony episodes, all worked to demonstrate that each author conceived of a creation story that fit into external organizing principles. Where the *Enuma Elish* followed a traditional divine power model of creation and organized its cosmogony around a corporeal model, Ovid created a creation narrative the was influenced by both Greco-Roman poetry and natural-scientific principles. Meanwhile the Biblical psalms and Genesis 1-2:4a were influenced by monotheism to varying degrees. Additionally, Genesis 1-2:4a was strongly influenced by Priestly laws and principles.

In the preceding chapters this thesis has attempted to demonstrate not only the viability of structuralist, tabular textual comparison, but also why it is a better method for approaching the comparative question. The historically framed model of general cultural contact of Burkert and
López-Ruiz would not have allowed me to group the *Metamorphoses* with either the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, or the Biblical Book of Genesis, as there is no evidence of Roman exposure to these texts at the time that Ovid was writing. López-Ruiz mentions the importance of a "Mediterranean continuum",260 citing several scholars who talk about the interrelated quality of Mediterranean culture across a wide geographical and temporal span. Nevertheless she limits her own investigation to the interaction between Grecian and Semitic interactions, specifically those at the level of "mainly oral and intimate transmission of stories and beliefs" that occur "between mothers and sons, nannies and children, peers in commercial enterprises, artists and apprentices, religious specialists, and so on",261 arguing that "the rigid scholarly model of textual transmission [...] needs to be replaced".262 The comparative analysis undertaken in this thesis, which allowed the inclusion of a classical Roman text along with the ancient Near Eastern texts, therefore encapsulates the Mediterranean cultural continuum more holistically than could López-Ruiz's model. If not for the inclusion of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* the connection between P's flood and creation narratives would have been less apparent, as would the spatial-temporal movement of creation in both the *Enuma Elish* and Genesis 1-2:4a. This thesis has demonstrated not only the viability of including seemingly unrelated texts in a literary comparison, but also the importance of doing so in order to enrich a literary comparative project.

262 López-Ruiz, *When the Gods Were Born*, 5, emphasis original.
WORKS CITED


WORKS REFERENCED


O'Hara, James J. "'Some God...or His Own Heart': Two Kinds of Epic Motivation in the Proem to Ovid's 'Metamorphoses'." *The Classical Journal* 100, no. 2 (2004-2005): 149-161.


