

The Origins of the World: The Story of Creation in the Bible, the Qur'an, Epic of Gilgamesh, the Ginnungagap and Hesiod's Theogony

Nedić, Tomislav

Undergraduate thesis / Završni rad

2015

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku, Filozofski fakultet**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:142:694613>

Rights / Prava: [In copyright](#) / [Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-07-18**



Repository / Repozitorij:

[FFOS-repository - Repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Osijek](#)



Sveučilište J. J. Strossmayera u Osijeku

Filozofski fakultet

Preddiplomski studij: Engleski jezik i književnost – Njemački jezik i
književnost

Tomislav Nedić

**The Origins of the World: The Story of Creation in the *Bible*,
the *Qur'an*, *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the *Ginnungagap* and Hesiod's**

Theogony

Završni rad

Mentor: doc. dr. sc. Borislav Berić

Osijek, 2015.

CONTENTS

	Abstract	2
	Introduction	3
I	The <i>Bible</i>	4
II	The <i>Qur'an</i>	7
III	The <i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i>	9
IV	The <i>Ginnungagap</i>	11
V	Hesiod's <i>Theogony</i>	14
	Conclusion	17
	Works Cited	19

Abstract

Creation myths are stories that try to describe the origins of the world around us and give some purpose to life and existence. Most of them describe how the world and the human being came into existence. Most of the creation myths can be grouped one way or another thanks to many common elements such myths share. Of course, there are also some differences that are sometimes a result of different purpose various texts serve. Sacred texts, such as the *Bible* and *Qur'an* praise God for the creation of the world by virtue of his omnipotence and benevolence, while other, more secular texts have somewhat more fortuitous causes of creation. These texts cannot be understood literally nor as some basis for a scientific approach to a better understanding of how the universe came to be. They have their own purpose, be it to preserve the national identity of a certain group of people, enforce laws, promote religiousness, or simply to entertain. However, one must take into account the time and place of the creation of such documents as well as the original language in which they were written, because they tend to use now obsolete phrases, puns or word play which are hard to translate efficiently into modern languages. Since most of creation myths deal with the beginning of time and space, with some of them even belonging to the oldest written sources and as such have innumerable for history. They also represent the foundations of their respective mythologies which in turn have influenced arts and literature to these days and in some way shaped the modern civilization and its worldview. Having the ambiguity of certain collocations in mind while examining such documents can help to a better understanding of the message it is trying to convey and the influence it has had on history.

Keywords: creation myth, God, the *Bible*, the *Qur'an*, mythology, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, civilization, the *Ginnungagap*, the *Theogony*

Introduction

Because curiosity is in the human nature and it is only natural for us to wonder about what we do not know, the most common type of myth in the human culture is the creation myth. Almost every known civilization has some sort of creation myth among its sacred texts. Most of them are either cosmogonical or anthropogenic myths, which means that they describe the creation of the cosmos or the man. The creation myths usually have a lot in common. They report about an unspecific time in the past and include supernatural elements such as deities, talking animals, transformations etc. Mircea Eliade, a professor of religion at the University of Chicago, classifies the creation myths into five basic groups: creation ex nihilo, creation through the Earth diver, creation from the chaos, creation by dismemberment of a world parent, and creation by emergence (Leonard 32-33). The ability to precisely classify myths according to these principles proves that many creation myths really have so much in common. Some of them can even be classified in two or more groups.

This paper will present five different creation myths that all belong to the Western civilization and have had some influence on it. Three of them originated in the Near East but with some time difference. The other two were created at two opposite ends of Europe, namely Iceland and Greece. Since they all have influenced the modern society, it will be interesting to see how much they have influenced each other, how many similarities and differences they have, and if they can be classified according to the groups of prof. Eliade. At least one thing they have in common. All of them try in their own framework and with their own intentions to give some answers to the questions of who we are and how everything around us came into existence.

1. The *Bible*

The creation story in the *Bible* can be found at the very beginning, in the first verses of the first book of the *Bible*, *Genesis*. *Genesis*, together with the next four books, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy* belongs to the *Torah*, or the *Pentateuch*, which is considered a sacred text among both the Christians and the Jews. The *Pentateuch* is often attributed to Moses with the implication that Moses himself is the central figure of the *Pentateuch* and that he, through his actions, laws, and probably some written legacy founded the nation, religion, and identity of Israel and also provided the core for the books of the *Torah*. In those days the books usually did not have a single author. The biblical authors kept the tradition entrusted to them, explained, modernized, and adjusted them in accordance with their time. That way, the book also grew and matured in the course of time (Kresina).

In accordance with that in *Genesis* there are two creation stories which were written long after Moses by two different traditions, the so-called Yahwist and Priestly traditions. The Yahwist tradition is called that way because of the frequent use of God's name Yahweh. It dates back to King Solomon in tenth century BC. This tradition has more of a cult than moral value and it uses many anthropomorphisms in describing God and His actions. The Priestly tradition originated during the Babylonian captivity period in sixth century BC by Aaron's descendants, priests from the tribe of Levi. It focuses on keeping the Commandments and carrying out regulations as a way of keeping the national identity of Israel during their exile in Babylon (Kresina).

Despite being more recent than the Yahwist source, the Priestly account of creation begins *Genesis* and the *Bible* as a whole. It is a more detailed description of creation. God is presented as an eternal and omnipotent being that existed long before anything else and created everything. The writer reports the whole creation day by day, whereby God creates with ease and through the power of his words. The creation can be divided in two halves. In the first three days God divides light from darkness, waters under the firmament from waters above the firmament, and land from water. In the next three days God decorates and populates heaven and earth. His creations are presented in a way a contemporary Jew viewed things, in accordance to their perceived dignity with humans coming at the end as the crown of creation: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (*Genesis* 1:26). Furthermore, the writer keeps with the Jewish tradition of reverence to the number seven.

Wanting to give a theological and liturgical meaning to the whole creation, the writer thoughtfully follows the framework of the Jewish week which ends with the seventh days as the day of perfection (7 is a symbolical number of completeness and perfection, peace and God's blessing). (Kresina)

That way, this creation story has features of an origin myth. The writer wanted to emphasize the importance of observing Shabbat and has God resting on the seventh day, thereby blessing it. The man is to do the same and rest on Shabbat.

The second creation story continues immediately after the first. It belongs to the Yahwist tradition and centers on the creation of man rather than the creation of the world. It is a more poetic story with the writer using many symbolic words. For example, the story opens with words "in the day that Yahweh God made the earth and the heavens" (*Genesis* 2:4). It is worth noting the difference between verbs make and create. According to the Oxford Dictionary, the verb make is defined as "form (something) by putting parts together or combining substances". Verb create, however, is defined as "bring (something) into existence", out of nowhere. The God of the Yahwist tradition is much more anthropomorphized than the God of the Priestly tradition. He is a builder, who makes heaven and earth, and a potter who "form[s] man of the dust of the ground" (*Genesis* 2:7). He then breathes life into the man, which serves the same purpose as *Genesis* 1:26 since there is no difference in Hebrew between words breath and spirit (hebr. רִיחַ – *ruach*), namely it denotes the distinctiveness of mankind among all other creation. Seeing that "it is not good for the man to be alone" (*Genesis* 2:18) God makes a woman out of the man's rib. Here comes the Hebrew word play again. Unfortunately, Hebrew is a rather poor language in terms of vocabulary, so a single word often times conveys several meanings. So does the Hebrew word rib too (hebr. צֵלַע – *tsela*). Besides rib, it can also mean side. If interpreted as side, it adds further to the equality of man and woman and is analogous to the Priestly creation story "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (*Genesis* 1:27). That way man and woman are created equal, half of Adam being Eve, and half of Eve being Adam. The phrase "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh" that the man uses to describe the woman in *Genesis* 2:23 was a common Jewish expression used to denote unity and relatedness and occurs a couple of times in the Bible and serves here to show that man and woman are one and that they are equal but can also be understood quite literally. The second creation story ends with

the observation that “they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (*Genesis 2:25*) which will further lead them into temptation by the serpent.

The two creation stories are only the first part of *Genesis* and, despite not being the central points of the book, they serve as the foundation for the whole Old Testament. The first eleven chapters differ somewhat from the rest of *Genesis* because they focus on humanity as a whole and try to give answers to questions about the origins of the world, the meaning of life, the origins of evil. So they include themes that are common among various human mythologies that also tried to find an answer to those questions. Creation of the world, the fall of man, the deceitful snake and the deluge are only a few of them. The rest of the chapters of *Genesis* are more historical in nature and serve to show the deep connection between God and His people, the Jews. Nevertheless, the books of the *Bible* cannot be taken as a source for natural sciences because they are much younger than the *Bible*. The intent of the *Bible* is to religiously explain the world and its nature. Its understanding of the world is confined to the time and space when/where it was written. Such insight into the true nature of the *Bible* can help the reader and serve as a basis for its scientific study (Kresina).

2. The *Qur'an*

Unlike the *Bible*, the *Qur'an* does not have a unified creation story. Instead, parts of the story can be found throughout the book where the writer deemed important. The *Qur'an* itself is believed to be revealed verbally by Allah to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel (or Jibril, as he is called in the *Qur'an*). It is considered a single book, unlike the *Bible* which is composed of many smaller books. The only division is into chapters (suras) and verses (ayahs). Being younger than the *Bible*, the *Qur'an* implies some knowledge of the Judeo-Christian tradition, which includes the creation story too. That may be one of the reasons that the creation story in *Qur'an* is not as highlighted as the biblical one.

Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne. He covers the night with the day, [another night] chasing it rapidly; and [He created] the sun, the moon, and the stars, subjected by His command. Unquestionably, His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds. (The *Qur'an*, *Al-A'raf* 7:54)

Just like in the *Bible*, the *Qur'an* has an *ex nihilo* creation story in which everything was created in six days. The importance of the seventh day is not stressed, however, as the Muslims do not observe the Shabbat; their holy day is Friday. Moreover, modern scholars point out that the word used for days here (arab. يوم – *yawm*, pl. *ayyam*) can mean both day and an unspecified time period. Moreover, the *Al-Ma'arij* sura contains a quote that says: “The angels and the Spirit will ascend to Him during a Day the extent of which is fifty thousand years” (The *Qur'an*, *Al-Ma'arij* 70:4). The quote seems to support the loose definition of a day in *Qur'an*. If interpreted as period it would mean that the creation happened during a longer time divided into six parts which would be closer to what modern science says about the Earth and the Universe.

But the creation story of *Qur'an* is anthropocentric, and despite acknowledging God's omnipotence and creation of “the sun, the moon, and the stars” (The *Qur'an*, *Al-A'raf* 7:54), his central and best creation is the human. To denote the distinctiveness of the humans, God is portrayed creating him from various types of clay and mud, cleaned through water and then formed into shape (The *Qur'an*, *Al-Hijr* 15:27). As well as

creating the first man, God is also instrumental in creating every human being as shown in the *Al-Mu'minun* sura:

And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators. (The *Qur'an*, *Al-Mu'minun* 23:12-14)

The *Qur'an* is definitely not a scientific text, but one cannot help but notice that the writer of these lines possessed some knowledge of human gestation as this is a pretty accurate description of fetal development.

Another major creation event mentioned is the creation of angels. Whereas the *Bible* sometimes acknowledges the existence of angels and even that Satan once was one of them, the *Qur'an* mentions the fall of Satan or Iblis too. In contrast to humans, the angels and jinn were created from fire. When God formed man from clay, He breathed life into him and commanded his angels to bow down before his newest creation. All angels except Iblis obeyed believing himself to be better than man (The *Qur'an*, *Al-Baqarah* 2:34).

At the moment of the creation, the angels are ordered by God to bow down to Adam, and so they do, with the exception of Iblis, who is then condemned for his rebellion and becomes the enemy and tempter of humanity. The story is told seven times in the *Quran*, each time in a slightly different form. (McAuliffe, ed. 82)

All in all, the *Qur'an* creation story differs only slightly from the biblical one. Continuing on the Abrahamic and Judeo-Christian tradition it adds also the creation of the angels and Satan's rebellion, stories that exist in the Judeo-Christian tradition too but were omitted in *Genesis*. Still, the two creation accounts are almost totally equivalent, having the same creator God and almost the same structure. The main difference is between the unity of the story in the *Bible*, despite having two accounts, and the scattered parts of the story in the *Qur'an*. This is most likely because some books of the *Bible* are also historical, so the writers wanted to order the events chronologically, while the *Qur'an* is only a sacred text serving a spiritual purpose.

3. The *Epic of Gilgamesh*

The *Epic of Gilgamesh* belongs to the oldest written texts of the Western civilization. For better understanding of the text, it is important to have in mind the circumstances and the literary style of in which they were written. It is a very allegorical text in its nature and contains a lot of symbols. It also contains some stories similar to the *Bible* and *Qur'an*, the most distinctive ones concerning the creation of man and his downfall and the story of the deluge. Some scholars believe that it directly influenced the creation stories of the Abrahamic religions.

The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is a part of the Sumerian mythology to which the so called *Eridu Genesis* also belongs. The text, despite being younger than the *Epic of Gilgamesh* could explain the creation of the world of the epic. Unfortunately, many parts of the text are missing and what is left is a completely anthropocentric creation story, not unlike the one featured in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* with the world already created. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* begins by describing the magnificence of king Gilgamesh, but it also tells about him tormenting his kingdom, Uruk. The gods hear their cry and the goddess Aruru “washed her hands, took a pinch of clay, threw it down in the wild” (*Gilgamesh* 1:101-102). There was Enkidu created, from clay and water. He is described as a wild man, living in harmony with animals as one of them, his whole body covered in hair. While obviously not being the first man ever created in the epic, his creation story can be compared to the creation stories of the *Bible* and *Qur'an*. Just like in the *Qur'an*, man is created from clay and water. However, there is no mention of breathing life into him, nor giving him a soul. What is mentioned though, is Enkidu having “the virtue of the god of war, of Ninurta himself” (*Gilgamesh* 1:104). That way Enkidu is presented as both fragile and strong, both mortal and godlike. Just like Adam, who was also created from dust, water and clay, but who was created “in [God’s] image, after [His] likeness” (*Genesis* 1:26).

Another interesting point connects the three creation stories. Namely, it seems that man was created as vegetarian. In the *Bible* not only man, but also all of the creation, as it was supposed to be perfect.

God also said, 'Look, to you I give all the seed-bearing plants everywhere on the surface of the earth, and all the trees with seed-bearing fruit; this will be your food. And to all the wild animals, all the birds of heaven and all the living creatures that creep along the ground, I give all the foliage

of the plants as their food.' And so it was. God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good. (*Genesis* 1:29-31)

O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Garden, and eat you freely of the fruits thereof where you will. (*The Qur'an, Al-Baqarah* 2:35)

Enkidu receives no such instruction from any of the gods, but it is implied that he and the animals lived in harmony.

with the gazelles he grazes on grasses,

joining the throng with the game at the water-hole,

his heart delighting with the beasts in the water. (*Gilgamesh* 1:110-112).

Furthermore, he is described as helping the animals in avoiding traps set for them in the wilderness and escaping from trappers.

That is the point when the woman comes into his life and this leads to the fall of man in this story. Some trapper sees Enkidu and gets scared by him. His father advises him to bring a harlot to the wild man saying that “her allure [was] a match for even the mighty!” (*Gilgamesh* 1:141). When Enkidu sees the harlot, he is instantly smitten and the two of them have intercourse “for six days and seven nights” (*Gilgamesh* 1:193). After that, when he looked around, he realized that he became alienated from the animals who were surrounding him and that he no longer belonged to the wilderness. Asking the harlot to lead him to civilization, he abandons his former home and companions. In comparison, the *Bible* and *Qur'an* have a similar story where God realizes that “It is not good that the man should be alone” (*Genesis* 2:18) and decides to make him a help. After the man fails to recognize any of the animals as a “worthy help”, God creates the woman from the man’s rib. Soon after, a serpent tempted Eve, the first woman, into disobeying God by eating a fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Adam, the first man, was tempted through Eve, and he ate too. After God found out, He expelled them from the Garden of Eden thereby cursing the ground “for the man’s sake” (*Genesis* 3:17). Given that “in Ancient Near Eastern culture, the words for “fruit” and “knowledge” both carry strong sexual overtones” (Damen) it can be argued that the fall of Adam, just like fall of Enkidu happened because of the symbolical loss of innocence through sexual intercourse.

Contrary to the *Bible* and *Qur'an* which are sacred religious texts the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is basically a secular narrative with some religious elements, in spite of which the epic probably never had a religious purpose. It is an epic that mostly deals with human mortality and Gilgamesh’s fruitless attempts to avert it from which most of

the tragedy stems (Mastin, "Gilgamesh"). His motivation for such a quest came after his friend Enkidu succumbed to an illness. Trying to outsmart death has since become a general human theme upon which many modern stories are built.

4. The *Ginnungagap*

The Norse creation myth is quite unlike the myths of the Ancient Near East. However, there are some similarities. For one, it is a polytheistic myth which would bring it closer to the Sumerian tradition. Unlike any of the previous stories though, it features a multitude of characters and the creation itself is quite dynamic and violent, but also colorful and interesting.

Everything begins with the Ginnungagap, the primordial void. It is an endless void separating Niflheim, the ice world, from Muspelheim, the fire world, and roughly corresponding to Chaos in the Greek mythology and the state of the world in the *Bible* before God created light. According to the *Gylfaginning*, a part of the *Prose Edda*, a collection of mythological stories by Snorri Sturluson from the thirteenth century Iceland, the fires of Muspelheim and the ice of Niflheim met in the Ginnungagap and formed Ymir, the first giant. After him, a cow named Audhumbla was also created by ice and fire. Ymir fed on her milk while she fed on "the ice-blocks which were salty" (Sturluson, *Gylfaginning*). By licking the ice, Audhumbla uncovered Buri, the first of the Aesir gods, who would become Odin's grandfather. Later on, Odin and his brothers slew the giant Ymir and from his body, they created the world,

from his blood the sea and lakes, from his flesh the earth, from his bones the mountains; rocks and pebbles they made from his teeth and jaws and those bones that were broken [...] They also took his skull and made the sky from it and set it over the earth with its four sides, and under each corner they put a dwarf. These are called: East, West, North, and South. (Sturluson, *Gylfaginning*).

The celestial bodies were created from embers flying from Muspelheim into Ginnungagap. After all of that was done, Odin and his two brothers walked by the sea and found two trees from which they created the first humans, Ask and Embla. It is described how they in turn gave them life, form, senses, and reason.

According to the Norse myth, apart from the primordial void, the worlds of ice and fire have always existed too. It is not hard to see where such tradition would come from, being that Snorri Sturluson hails from Iceland. Two worlds meet in Iceland, in the form of tectonic plates. Thanks to the tectonic activity and its latitude, it is an island of great diversity, a place where ice and fire regularly meet, a place where active volcanos spill lava over the dormant ice. Important to note is also the fact that the ice coming to Ginnungagap is salty, which would imply the existence of a sea. It is only natural for the writer to start the creation of the world in a place he is familiar with. Similarly, the writers of the *Bible* and *Qur'an* write the Garden of Eden somewhere in Mesopotamia even identifying the rivers Euphrates and Tigris as flowing through it. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is also clearly set in Mesopotamia, together with the creation of Enkidu.

The next thing very important to note is the absence of *ex nihilo* creation. Nothing was created out of nothing, the matter used to create the world already existed. A giant was formed from fire and ice and after his death his body was used to create the world. This macabre imagery actually goes along with the scientific law of conservation of matter, according to which all the matter there is was created during the Big Bang, so new matter cannot be produced while the existing matter cannot be destroyed. What is more, the course of the Norse mythology is cyclical, rather than linear, which means that a cosmos is created after the destruction of the previous cosmos in the event known as Ragnarok (McCoy). It is really a depressing cycle where gods already know the future and know that in the end they will have to face the giants again whereby all of them will go down and the world will descend into Ginnungagap again until the cosmos is created anew. It is an utter absence of *ex nihilo* creation and is actually a combination between the creation from chaos and the world parent as the world parent himself is created from the chaos and is later dismembered so that his body becomes the world.

The creation of man is also somewhat different from the Ancient Near Eastern traditions but has more similarities than the creation of the world. The man was made by the gods, also using something that already existed and transforming it. The gods then give the man form, reason, and even soul or “spirit and life” as it is put in *Gylfaginning*. The names Ask and Embla are also somewhat similar to the names Adam and Eve. The difference is that the Norse myth is not anthropocentric at all. The only anthropogenic part of the *Edda* creation story is when the gods literally stumble upon two trees and then and there decide to make a man and a woman. No purpose or reason for the decision is listed. They are the put into Midgard and gods try to protect them

from the giants. However, given that the Norse mythology deals a lot more with gods and their affairs and taking into account the fatalistic worldview it has it is no wonder that the man is left aside.

Unlike the Judeo-Christian, Greco-Roman and even Egyptian myths the Norse mythology has often been left aside, except for its native Scandinavia, Great Britain and to an extent Germany. In the modern times, however, it gains on influence, especially in comics where Thor, Odin, Loki, and others make regular appearances and modern fantasy literature for example in works of J. R. R. Tolkien and G. R. R. Martin whose series of novels' title *A Song of Ice and Fire* could also be a cue to the Ginnungagap and the Norse creation myth.

5. Hesiod's Theogony

Greek mythology is very rich in terms of narratives so that it contains many stories and traditions with some of them overlapping and even contradicting themselves. Among the less ambiguous stories is the story of creation. It is preserved thanks to the *Theogony*, a poem written by the Greek poet Hesiod in seventh century BC. It is a poem about the beginnings of the world, the origins of the gods, and their fight against the Titans, dubbed Titanomachy.

The *Theogony*, like all Greek poems, begins with an invocation to the gods and the Muses. After that, the creation begins:

First of all Chaos [Gap] came into being. But then
Gaia broad-chested, always the unshakable seat of all
the immortals who hold the peaks of snowy Olympus,
and dark Tartaros in the recesses of the wide-wayed earth,
and Eros, the most beautiful among the immortal gods, 120
loosener of limbs, who subdues the mind and prudent counsel
in the chests of all gods and of all men. (Hesiod 116-122)

Just like many myths in the world, and comparable to the *Bible*, *Qur'an*, and especially the *Edda*, in the beginning there was only Chaos, a gaping void of nothingness. However, very soon, the Earth appears, together with the personifications of hell and love. It is interesting to note the role Gaia, the personification of the Earth plays. Contrary to the modern worldview that started with the Judeo-Christian tradition in which the world is a “mere artifact, into which [God's] divine substance never enters” (McCoy), the Greek myth supports the animistic view where the Earth has its own conscience of which is Gaia the personification as the literal Mother Earth. Similarly, the Norse myth has the world as the dead body of a giant, giving it that way some sort of spirit and life.

Afterwards, Mother Earth gives birth to her first son Uranus, the sky, and has children with him. She gives birth to the Titans, Cyclopes and Hecatonchires “and they hated their father from the beginning” (Hesiod 155). It seems that their father-children relationship was severely strained because Uranus hated his children too, and so “conceal[ed] them all in hiding place in Gaia and did not sent them back into the light, and he delighted in his evil deed” (Hesiod 157-158). Gaia loved her children and devised a plan with the youngest of the Titans, Kronos, to save her children by

emasculating Uranus which Kronos did with a sickle. The severed genitals, however, produced offspring of their own. The blood that fell on Gaia gave birth to giants and Erinyes. The genitals themselves fell into the ocean and from the sea foam around them appeared the goddess of love and beauty, Aphrodite. Having overthrown his father, Kronos assumed the position of the king of the world and took his sister Rhea as wife siring in the process six children with her. To avoid being overthrown by his sons like he overthrew his father, he swallowed his children. This is a repetition of history, as Uranus himself did almost the same. Just like Gaia, Rhea was unhappy with such treatment of her children so she hid her youngest son Zeus. When he grew up, he liberated his brothers and sisters and led a war against the Titans which the gods won. Just like his Kronos, Zeus overthrew his father and assumed his position. He also took his sister Hera as wife which marked beginning of the rule of the Olympians.

Somewhat similar to other accounts of the creation of the world, Hesiod's *Theogony* is, just like its name says, a poem about the appearance of gods. And in that it is unique among the works covered in this paper. Having no anthropogenic element, as it never even mentions the humans, the *Theogony* certainly is anthropomorphic and describes gods and other entities as having human characteristics. They fight, have sex, get married, and even lead wars. That way the *Theogony* is not only a creation story, but also an allegorical poem that deals with human psyche as well. It is interesting to note that in his other poem *Works and Days* Hesiod divides history into five ages, whereby ages get progressively worse. He identifies the first age, the so called Golden Age, as the age when Kronos ruled. Zeus's takeover marks begin of the Silver Age. It is clear that in *Theogony*, Zeus is presented in a much more favorable light than Kronos, who is, typically for the Ancient Greek poetry, formulaically described as "Kronos of crooked counsel". Despite that, his rule seems to be considered better than Zeus's. Or at least the time when he ruled was deemed better.

Another thing important to note is the similarity between the treatment Uranus's and Kronos's children received from their fathers. The difference being that Kronos is described as actually swallowing his children alive, whereas Uranus only hides them inside Gaia. This can serve as an allegory of time ruthlessly destroying its own children, e. g. everything that took time to be made will one day again be destroyed by time. Taking this together with Hesiod's division of Ages of Man in consideration could mean that the *Theogony* in part is about nostalgia or that it at least has some psychological topics covered. It is hard not to notice elements from Freudian theories

which of course include the Oedipus complex (with Oedipus too being a figure from Greek mythology) present in Uranus who takes his mother Gaia for wife, Kronos who despises his father and eventually overthrows him, and Zeus who also overthrows his father. There is also the emasculation of Uranus and according to Freud the castration anxiety is triggered after the onset of Oedipus complex during early childhood. Certainly, Hesiod's *Theogony* contains a lot of material for a psychoanalytical study.

The *Theogony* is basically a collection of Ancient Greek stories about their gods and the origins of the world. To a degree it has the same purpose in the Greek mythology as *Genesis* has in the *Bible* because it brings the story of the birth of gods and their familial relations. Despite that, it cannot be observed as a definitive source of Greek mythology but provides insight into the understanding of the Greek mythology at the time. Greek mythology was always changing as time went by and together with time, some traditions and narratives have also changed (Mastin, "Theogony").

Conclusion

Among these five texts, two are considered sacred texts important in their own respective religions. Coincidentally, they are also texts belonging to monotheistic religions, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The other three texts are secular and epic in their nature, while still based on polytheistic traditions. This division is of course the most obvious one, and it is not hard to notice the many similarities between the creation accounts of the *Qur'an* and *Bible*. Both of them feature a single omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent deity who exists before time and forever and creates *ex nihilo*, from nothing, only through his words. Because of this, these accounts seem more supernatural.

In contrast to them, the European myths start with a gaping void which gives birth to creatures. These creatures themselves represent the world and certain aspects of it. Such accounts use personification to a great extent. Lacking an omnipotent deity, they feature no *ex nihilo* creation and actually seem more natural and cyclical. The best example is the contrast between *Genesis* and the *Theogony*. Whereas *Genesis* attributes all of creation to God's infinite power and use of words, the *Theogony* presents a story of creation as a large family tree where sex and reproduction have the primary role in creating. After the god of love Eros was born "evolution (with a few exceptions) is biological, female and male deities joining in intercourse to produce offspring, each of whom adds further diversity and complexity to creation" (Scully 24). That way, Eros, as a symbol of lust and erotic love is identified as the force behind the creation in *Theogony*. Meanwhile, in *Genesis* sex is only vaguely implied through the forbidden fruit.

When it comes to the creation of man, the *Bible* and *Qur'an* again have basically the same story, but the *Epic of Gilgamesh* comes very close to them and even Snorri Sturluson's account shows some similarities. What is important to note is that in the *Bible* and *Qur'an* man is formed and not created. This implies the distinctiveness of humans as the best and most important creation. Just like in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, man is formed from dust, clay, and/or water. Being an older text, many scholars agree that the *Epic of Gilgamesh* had a major influence on the Judeo-Christian creation story, but also on *Genesis* as a whole. In regards of the *Edda*, the main similarities are the names of the first humans and the fact that they were also formed from something that was already in existence.

As it was already said, the creation myths cannot be used for natural scientific explanations but they are not necessarily incompatible with sciences either. For example, the Big Bang theory about the spreading of the Universe contains some elements of the ex nihilo creation as well. The point of infinite density in which the Universe was compressed can be identified as the primordial void. The creation of man regularly features using something that already exists and molding it to form a human being. The evolution works on same principles, whereby an already existing life form changes over time giving life to new species across the world. However, the creation myths serve other purposes and are of more interest to social than to natural sciences.

Works Cited

- The Bible, King James. Genesis, from *The holy Bible*, King James version. Electronic Text Center. University of Virginia Library. Web. 27 August 2015
- Bible Hub. Web 27 August 2015 <<http://biblehub.com/hebrew/6763.htm>>
<<http://biblehub.com/hebrew/7307.htm>>
- Damen, Mark. "Chapter 2: The Epic of Gilgamesh". *Ancient Literature and Language*. Utah State University. 2004. Web. 31. August 2015
- Kresina, Ante. "Uvodi i napomene uz Petoknjižje". *Biblija*. Kršćanska sadašnjost. Zagreb. 2003. Print.
- The Epic of Gilgamesh*. Translated by Maureen Gallery Kovacs. Electronic Edition by Wolf Carnahan. 1998. Web. 31 August 2015
- Hesiod. *Theogony*. R. Hamilton. 0-92952-415-2. (paper) Bryn Mahr Commentaries. Web. 2 September 2015
- Leonard, Scott, and Michael McClure. *Myth and Knowing (illustrated ed.)*. McGraw-Hill. 2004.
- Mastin, Luke. "Epic of Gilgamesh". *Classical Literature*. 2009. Web. 31 August 2015
- Mastin, Luke. "Theogony". *Classical Literature*. 2009. Web. 2 September 2015
- McAuliffe. Jane Dammen et al. eds. *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an*. Cambridge, UK. Cambridge University Press. 2006. Print.
- McCoy, Dan. "The Creation of Cosmos". *Norse Mythology for Smart People*. 2012. Web. 1 September 2015
- Oxford Dictionaries. Web 27 August 2015
<<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/create>>
<<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/form>>
- The Qur'an. Sahih International. Web. 28 August 2015 <quran.com>
- Quran Dictionary. Web 28 August 2015
<<http://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=ywm>>
- Scully, Stephen. *Hesiod's Theogony: From Near Eastern Creation Myths to Paradise Lost*. Oxford, UK. Oxford University Press. 2015. Print.
- Sturluson, Snorri. *The Prose Edda. Gylfaginning*, from *The Prose Edda*. Translated by Jean I. Young. Cambridge, England. Bowes & Bowes, 1954. Web. 1 September 2015