

## The Motif of 'the Ill-Willed Nursing Woman Who is Harmed' in the Mythologies of Herakles and Krishna<sup>1</sup>

ARJAN STERKEN

*University of Groningen, the Netherlands*

**Abstract:** The present paper explores the motif of 'the ill-willed nursing woman who is harmed' in the mythological accounts of Hēraklēs and Kṛṣṇa. Core versions are distilled from five Greek and seven Sanskrit texts. As to the former, Hēra is deceived or persuaded in nursing Hēraklēs and when she throws him off, her milk either gives Hēraklēs immortality or forms the Milky Way. As to the latter, Pūtanā poisoned her breast to kill Kṛṣṇa, but dies when Kṛṣṇa drains her life. By applying the method of 'reciprocal illumination' I uncover a general structure behind both texts and distinguish six basic elements: the identity of the nurse; the content of the breast; the deception; the harm done; the gift; and the aftermath. While I intend to show that both stories contain these same basic elements, they both use and develop them in different ways with different but related results.

Comparing Hēraklēs and Kṛṣṇa is popular. We can find it nowadays in popular discourse, where it is often guided by an Indian nationalistic goal: to prove that Kṛṣṇa is the more original of both figures, meaning that the ancient Greeks assimilated Kṛṣṇa within their own pantheon as Hēraklēs.<sup>2</sup> Discussions of this kind were not unknown to the ancient past either. The Greek ambassador Megasthenēs wrote at the end of the 4th century BCE of an Indian tribe, the Souraseni, worshipping Hēraklēs.<sup>3</sup> Bryant notes that this probably concerns the Śūrasenas, to which the deity Kṛṣṇa belonged.<sup>4</sup> Lassing agrees with Bryant,<sup>5</sup> while others would describe the Indian Hēraklēs as Balarāma<sup>6</sup>, Śiva,<sup>7</sup> or Indra.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This article is an adaptation of my bachelor thesis *Deception and Deliverance: The motif of 'the nursing ill-willed woman who is harmed' in the mythologies of Hēraklēs and Kṛṣṇa*, which was completed in June 2015 at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YklF1Mb7cMM>, <https://ramanan50.wordpress.com/2014/03/05/lord-krishna-was-also-a-greek-god-hercules/>, <http://archaeologyonline.net/artifacts/vedic-discoveries>, and <http://bibhudev.blogspot.nl/2014/03/hercules-and-balarama-symbolic-and.html>, all accessed February 9, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Dahlquist (1962), pp. 56-67.

<sup>4</sup> Bryant (2007), p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Robertson (1910), p. 162.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 163-164.

In scholarly discourse on mythology in general and Indo-European mythology in particular, however, the comparison between Hēraklēs and Kṛṣṇa has been mainly left aside, or only mentioned in passing. Allen notes that this is true in general for comparison between Greek and Indian myth.<sup>9</sup> For this reason I wish to compare Hēraklēs and Kṛṣṇa in a more detailed fashion. I shall focus on one event that takes place during the childhood of both deities: both Hēraklēs and Kṛṣṇa happen to be nursed by a woman who is hostile towards them, but despite her ill will it is not the hero but the woman who suffers. This basic scene, which sounds perfectly simple, is distinctively given shape in both mythologies: in the myth of Hēraklēs it is Hēra who nurses the young hero, and in the myth of Kṛṣṇa we find the demoness Pūtanā nursing Kṛṣṇa.

In comparing those stories I shall be looking for similarities, differences, and omissions, and see if they can shed light on each other by using Sharma's principle of 'reciprocal illumination.' This principle tells us that comparison does not only shed light on similarities, differences, and omissions, but also provides a deeper understanding of both phenomena by illuminating aspects which are present in one and obscured in the other.<sup>10</sup> Later on in this article I shall use Propp, the folklorist who developed a morphology for the study of folk tales, to give a counter-argument to my analysis of the structural similarities between the two stories. The comparison of these scenes with each other is only done very briefly by Rank<sup>11</sup> and Slater.<sup>12</sup> After this introduction I will first present the texts that contain the different versions of the story (1), after which I will analyse the story itself (2) and finally I will proceed to offer some concluding remarks based on the preceding analysis (3).

A very interesting observation is that the motif of 'the ill-willed nursing woman who is harmed' does not seem to appear anywhere else.<sup>13</sup> Rank,<sup>14</sup> Lewis,<sup>15</sup> Dunn,<sup>16</sup> and West<sup>17</sup> note that the nursing of the protagonist by a woman other than his own mother, here common to both myths, as such is not a rare motif. We have similar but still differing motifs in both Slavic and Armenian folktales. The motif of an attempted assassination on a child by breastfeeding it reflects the Slavic water nymphs known as Rusalki (among other names), who unintentionally kill an infant by breastfeeding it, as Jiří Dynda pointed out to me. In the Armenian epic *Daredevils of Sassoun* 3.7 we have the protagonist of the third book, David of

<sup>7</sup> McCrindle (1877), pp. 57-58.

<sup>8</sup> Acharya (2013), pp. 121-122.

<sup>9</sup> Allen (2010), p. 358.

<sup>10</sup> Sharma (2005), p. ix.

<sup>11</sup> Rank (1959), p. 50.

<sup>12</sup> Slater (1968), p. 350.

<sup>13</sup> Jiří Dynda, personal communication, May 26, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Rank (1959), p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> Lewis (1980), pp. 211-213 and 248-249.

<sup>16</sup> Huys (1995), pp. 30-31.

<sup>17</sup> West (2007), p. 427.

Sassoun, who is breastfed by a woman who belongs to a hostile city.<sup>18</sup> This reminds us of the hostility of the women in the stories of Hēraklēs and Kṛṣṇa, with the exception that the woman here, Ismil Khatoun, is not hostile to the child, but just belongs to a group hostile to him.

That the motif is not found elsewhere might perhaps have to do with the specific description I gave of this motif. Perhaps this specific motif can be split into two: 'the ill-willed woman nurses a child' and 'the nurse is harmed'. Unfortunately, this does not resolve the situation: I was still unable to find both new motifs. A promising motif, however, is 'sham nurse kills enemy's children' (K931), which seems to be a popular theme in the eastern part of Asia, India, and Africa.<sup>19</sup> This looks similar to the Slavic Rusalki, but it is unfortunately too divergent of the motifs of the stories under investigation here.

That the woman is ill-disposed towards the protagonist and is harmed in the process is thus a rare occurrence. In fact, up to present I have only encountered it in Hēraklēs' and Kṛṣṇa's stories. Given that this motif does not seem to appear other Indo-European mythological systems, we can hardly describe it as an Indo-European myth in broad terms. However, the fact that we do find it in both Sanskrit and Ancient Greek, two languages that belong to the dialect grouping of Indo-Iranian, Hellenic, and Armenian languages,<sup>20</sup> we might speak of a 'dialectal mythology', namely a branch of Indo-European mythology, if such a thing is even conceivable.

## 1. The Texts

For the Greek story we find five sources. First of all we have Diodorus of Sicily's *Library of History* (hence abbreviated as DS-BH, due to its Latin name *Bibliotheca Historica*) 4.9:6-7,<sup>21</sup> which can be dated to the latter half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE.<sup>22</sup> Secondly there is Pseudo-Eratosthenēs' *Katasterismoi* (PsE-K) chapter 44 'the Galaxy',<sup>23</sup> which is a collection of constellation myths based on Eratosthenēs of Cyrene and probably proceeds from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, but this particular collection stems from the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE.<sup>24</sup> Thirdly we have Lycophron's *Alexandra* (L-A) 1327-1328,<sup>25</sup> of which there is still a discussion going

<sup>18</sup> *David of Sassoun* (trans. Artin Shalian, 1964), p. 159.

<sup>19</sup> [www.momfer.ml](http://www.momfer.ml), a search engine for Thompson's Motif Index. Accessed September 18, 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Katz (2005), p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> Diodorus of Sicily, *Library of history (books iii – viii)*, trans. C.H. Oldfather (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), accessed February 14, 2015,

<http://www.theoi.com/Text/DiodorusSiculus4A.html#8>.

<sup>22</sup> Sulimani (2011), pp. 1-2.

<sup>23</sup> Condos (1970), pp. 369-376.

<sup>24</sup> Condos (1970 a), pp. 361.

<sup>25</sup> Lycophron, "Alexandra," in *Callimachus, hymns and epigrams. Lycophron. Aratus*, trans. A.W. Mair and G.R. Mair (London: William Heinemann, 1921), accessed March 24, 2015,

<http://www.theoi.com/Text/LycophronAlexandra1.html>; verses specified by Timothy Gantz,

on whether it belongs to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE author himself or a pseudepigraphical 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE author.<sup>26</sup> Fourthly we have Pausanias' *Hellados Periēgēsis* or *Description of Greece* (P-HP) 9.25:2,<sup>27</sup> a description of the ancient world dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE.<sup>28</sup> Lastly we have Hyginus' *Astronomica* (H-A) 2:43<sup>29</sup> which existed before the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE.<sup>30</sup> Although Hyginus is a Roman author, he is often regarded as a translator of Greek myth to Roman language and culture,<sup>31</sup> and is therefore included here.

For the Indian story we find seven versions. First of all we have the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (VPur) 5.5,<sup>32</sup> which is dated around 450 CE.<sup>33</sup> Then we have the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (BgPur) 10.6,<sup>34</sup> dated around 950 CE.<sup>35</sup> Thirdly there is the *Harivaṃśa* (HV) 2.6:22-34,<sup>36</sup> which became an appendix to the Mahābhārata and is written around 450 CE.<sup>37</sup> Fourthly we have the *Brahma Purāṇa* (BPur) 75:7-22,<sup>38</sup> written between 950 and 1350 CE.<sup>39</sup> Fifthly we have the *Brahma-Vaivarta Purāṇa* (BVPur) 4.10,<sup>40</sup> written between 750 and 1550 CE.<sup>41</sup> On the sixth place we have the *Agni Purāṇa* (APur) 12:14-15 and 18-19,<sup>42</sup> according to W. Doniger, composed around 850 CE.<sup>43</sup> Lastly, we have the *Padma Purāṇa* (PPur) 6.245:71-87,<sup>44</sup> dated around 750 CE.<sup>45</sup>

---

*Early Greek myth. A guide to literary and artistic sources. Volume one* (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 378.

<sup>26</sup> Fraser (2003).

<sup>27</sup> Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, trans. W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Omerod (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918), accessed February 14, 2015, <http://www.theoi.com/Text/Pausanias9B.html#7>.

<sup>28</sup> Papanicolaou-Christensen (2003), p. 162; Spawforth (2003): "Pausanias the Periegete".

<sup>29</sup> Gaius Julius Hyginus, *The myths of Hyginus*, trans. Mary Grant (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1960), accessed February 14, 2015, <http://www.theoi.com/Text/HyginusAstronomica2.html#43>.

<sup>30</sup> Fletcher (2013), p. 137.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 134-135.

<sup>32</sup> *The Vishnu Purana. A system of Hindu mythology and tradition*, trans. H.H. Wilson (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1961), and *A prose English translation of Vishnupuranam*, trans. Manmatha Nath Dutt (Calcutta: Elysium Press, 1896).

<sup>33</sup> Doniger (1975), p. 18.

<sup>34</sup> *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Tenth canto 'the summum bonum' (part two – ch. 6-12)*, trans. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (Worcester: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1977), and *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 'the story of the fortunate one'*, trans. Anand Aadhar Prabhu, accessed February 14, 2015, <http://www.srimadbhagavatam.org/canto10/chapter6.html>.

<sup>35</sup> Doniger (1975), p. 17.

<sup>36</sup> *Harivamsha Parva*, trans. A. Purushothaman and A. Harindranath, accessed February 14, 2015, [http://mahabharata-resources.org/harivamsa/vishnuparva/hv\\_2\\_006.html](http://mahabharata-resources.org/harivamsa/vishnuparva/hv_2_006.html).

<sup>37</sup> Doniger (1975), p. 17; Gonda (1960), p. 222.

<sup>38</sup> *Brahma Purāṇa. Part ii*, trans. J.L. Shastri (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985).

<sup>39</sup> Doniger (1975), p. 17.

<sup>40</sup> *Brahma-Vaivarta Puranam. Ganesa and Krisna janma khandas*, trans. Rajendra Nath Sen (Allahabad: Sudhindra Nath Vasu, 1922).

<sup>41</sup> Doniger (1975), p. 17.

<sup>42</sup> *Agni Purāṇam (a prose English translation) vol. 1*, trans. Manmatha Nāth Dutt Shastri (Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1967).

Three things should be noted regarding these texts: these versions are always considerably longer than the Greek ones, they are not connected to historical individual authors like the Greek versions, and they are always written down later than the Greek versions. This last point might point towards the transmission of the myth from Greece to India. This point can be strengthened when we consider the first point, that the Sanskrit texts are longer than the Greek ones. This is perhaps a result of the development of the story, where the short initial narrative gets enhanced by added details to decorate the story and to explain it more profoundly.

This does not prove transmission from Greece to India, though. That both cultures knew about each other is certain. This does not necessarily mean that there was continuous contact though, and it definitely does not mean that we can just assume what cultural property was transmitted in a presupposed contact, as Bernabé warns us.<sup>46</sup> This gives rise to another problem: why, of all stories, would this very rare and marginal Greek story be transmitted to India, where it gains more importance and attention? Perhaps, instead of borrowing, a common Indo-European core, or even a common Indo-Iranian/Hellenic/Armenian core, is more likely. However, there is no proof for that either, since until now the theme seems to be uniquely shared by Hēraklēs and Kṛṣṇa.

## 2. Analysis of the stories

In my analysis of both stories I will first focus on the Greek story (2.1), then the Indian story (2.2), after which I will compare them using Sharma's concept of 'reciprocal illumination' (2.3). In the following paragraphs I will collect the texts in different categories according to their similarities, and from these versions I will reconstruct a 'core' tale, while also keeping in mind their differences.

### 2.1 The Greek story

We can divide the Greek texts into three categories: the DS-BH, the astronomical versions (PsE-K and H-A), and the summaries (L-A and P-HP). The basic Greek story is as follows: Hēra is either persuaded (DS-HB) or deceived in order to nurse Hēraklēs; this causes her pain (DS-HB) or she discovers the trick (astronomical versions), after which she throws off Hēraklēs from her breast. DS-HB explains that the ill-willed stepmother saved Hēraklēs, while the astronomical versions state that the spilled milk formed the Milky Way. The differences and similarities between the different versions are schematically presented in figure 1.

<sup>43</sup> Doniger (1975), p. 17.

<sup>44</sup> *The Padma Purāṇa. Part ix*, trans. N.A. Deshpande (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Pvt. Ltd., 1956).

<sup>45</sup> Doniger (1975), p. 18.

<sup>46</sup> Bernabé (1995), pp. 12-13.

	DS-BH	Astro-nomic	Summaries	
			L-A	P-HP
<b>Preliminary/Aftermath</b>				
<b>Persuasion</b>				
<b>Deception</b>				
<b>Pain</b>			?	
<b>Discovery</b>				
<b>Throwing off</b>				
<b>Milk</b>			?	
<b>Explanation</b>				

Figure 1: schematic presentation of differences between Greek versions

DS-BH contains the most elaborate version of the myth, and it has four main differences with the other versions: 1) it includes a prelude and an aftermath; 2) Hēra is not deceived into nursing Hēraklēs, but is persuaded by the goddess Athēnē; 3) likewise Hēraklēs is not thrown off because Hēra discovers the trick, but because Hēraklēs causes Hēra pain; and 4) the spilled milk which forms the Milky Way is not mentioned. Just like the astronomical versions it includes an explanation for something. While the explanation is cosmogonic in the astronomical versions, DS-BH gives meaning to the story itself: while Hēraklēs’ natural mother (Alkmēnē) lets him perish, his stepmother (Hēra), even if bearing an ill will towards him, actually saves him.

The astronomical versions (PsE-K and H-A) differ on most details from DS-BH: Hēra is not persuaded but deceived, and she throws Hēraklēs off not because he causes her pain, but because she discovers the deception. Most importantly it gives a cosmogonic account of the Milky Way: it is caused by the spilled milk of Hēra.

The summaries (L-A and P-HP) are easy to group together by genre; by content, however, they differ. P-HP mentions the deception of Hēra by Zeus, thus siding itself with the astronomical versions. L-A, however, is really ambiguous. Especially interesting is the verb *σπαω* (*spaō*) used here, which has different meanings, of which two are of interest to us. It could merely mean ‘sucking out’, in the sense that Hēraklēs is sucking on Hēra’s breast. It could also mean ‘pulling apart’, however, where it shows a parallel to DS-BH 4.9:6, where Hēraklēs tugs too hard at Hēra’s breast, which causes her pain. However, that Hēra suffers pain is not mentioned in L-A, and might be only suggested by the verb *σπαω*. The ‘milky breast’ mentioned in L-A might be an illusion to the spilled milk in the astronomical versions. However, the poetic nature of L-A gives no clear preference to either of those versions.

## 2.2 The Indian story

In what regards the Indian story, we can divide the texts into five categories: the Bhaktic versions (BgPur and BVPur), the Night versions (VPur and BPur), HV, APur, and PPur. Now follows the reconstructed core tale: the demonic king Kaṁsa orders Pūtanā, who is known as a child killer, to kill the infant Kṛṣṇa. Viṣṇu came to earth as the avatāra Kṛṣṇa to stop Kaṁsa, so that the gods can rule once more.

Pūtanā will attempt to kill Kṛṣṇa by means of her poisoned breasts (Bhaktic versions and PPur) or by the fact that whoever sucks from her breast at night will die (Night versions). She comes during the night (Night versions, HV, PPur) or disguised as a beautiful woman (Bhaktic versions): thus she is concealed by either the darkness or her form. She picks up Kṛṣṇa who suckles from her, and this kills her. At death she roars and falls. The villagers find Kṛṣṇa on the dead Pūtanā and are afraid of her true form. Kṛṣṇa is picked up and ritually cleansed. The differences and similarities between the different versions are schematically presented in figure 2.

I named the first group the Bhaktic group because it includes the idea that Pūtanā is actually a virtuous being (BgPur 10.6:35-36 and BVPur 4.10:30-45), who is liberated at her death due to her interaction with Kṛṣṇa. This idea corresponds with the Bhaktic idea of liberation by interaction with or devotion to a deity. They are also the only versions that encompass a whole chapter. It has some unique elements in comparison with the core tale. At the start Kāmsa orders Pūtanā, the child killer, to kill Kṛṣṇa, by poisoning her breast and nursing him. Pūtanā's abilities are described, and also her appearance when she takes on the form of a beautiful woman. She comes to the village at daytime, where she is misidentified as Lakṣmī and has unobstructed access to Kṛṣṇa. Pūtanā is described as being like a mother with Kṛṣṇa, whom she picks up. The Bhaktic versions are also the only ones that mention Kṛṣṇa sucking the poison out of Pūtanā's breast. Because Pūtanā turned into a woman, she takes on her original form when she falls dead on the ground, when she is also liberated. Kṛṣṇa is picked up by Yaśodā, his foster mother, and then nursed by her. One detail is given a different content in BgPur and BVPur: BgPur states that Pūtanā's body is cut up to be burned, while BVPur states that Nanda consumes it before the remains are burned.

	Bhaktic		Night	HV	APur	PPur
	BgPur	BVPur				
Kāmsa orders Pūtanā to kill Kṛṣṇa						
Pūtanā child killer						
Abilities and description of Pūtanā						
Shapeshifting						
Bird						
Nighttime						
Pūtanā picks up Kṛṣṇa						
Breast poisoned						
Nursing at night causes death						
Pūtanā roars						
Pūtanā falls						
Pūtanā liberated						
Kṛṣṇa on dead Pūtanā						

Villagers afraid of Pūtanā’s form						
Villager(s) pick up Kṛṣṇa						
Kṛṣṇa cleansed						
Pūtanā’s body disposed						

Figure 2: schematic presentation of differences between versions.

The elements mentioned in the Bhaktic texts are not version-exclusive, though, and there are a few elements that are also present in other groups. The poisoning of Pūtanā’s breast is also attested in PPur, just as the burning of her body after her death. That Yaśodā is also present while Pūtanā nurses Kṛṣṇa is also seen in HV. There are also some elements that are exclusive to either the BgPur or BVPur. The unique elements in BVPur are that Pūtanā is Kāmsa’s sister and that Pūtanā gives a false identity when asked for it by the gopīs. BgPur has seven more unique elements or elements it shares with other versions. Firstly, it is the only one to give a description of Pūtanā’s body in her human form. Secondly, together with PPur it states that Kṛṣṇa knows what Pūtanā is. Thirdly, Kṛṣṇa holds Pūtanā’s breast (shared with VPur and BPur) and squeezes it (shared with BPur). Fourthly, that Pūtanā roars is not present in BVPur. Fifthly, Pūtanā’s roar causes an earthquake (shared with BPur). Sixthly, mantras are recited for Kṛṣṇa. Lastly, Kṛṣṇa is laid to rest after all of this. In general BgPur contains more details and shares more elements with the core tale than BVPur.

The Night group (VPur and BPur) is called so because of the significance of the night in their narrative, although this feature is not version-exclusive and can also be found in HV and PPur. They do not comprise a whole chapter like the Bhaktic versions, but still a good deal of it. Most points the VPur and BPur are equal to one another, BPur only seems to be more elaborate on some points. Pūtanā, named the child killer, comes at night while Kṛṣṇa is asleep. It shares with the Bhaktic group that Kṛṣṇa is taken up, but differs from it in that Pūtanā’s breast is not poisoned but tells that anyone who suckles from it at night will die. Kṛṣṇa holds the breast with both hands and suckles from it violently, and drains Pūtanā’s life. Pūtanā roars and falls, which awakens the villagers, who are afraid of her dead body. Kṛṣṇa is on the dead Pūtanā, from whom he is picked up and cleansed. BPur, in addition, states that Kṛṣṇa also squeezes Pūtanā’s breast hard, that her tendons are cut, that her roars cause earthquakes, and that Kṛṣṇa is laid to rest after all the ruckus.

The HV is the version that is most in conflict with the other versions. In this version, Pūtanā is a bird that frightens everyone. She is not Kāmsa’s sister as in BVPur, but his foster mother. She comes at night to the village where she nurses Kṛṣṇa with her avian breast, while Yaśodā sleeps next to him. Kṛṣṇa drains Pūtanā’s life, and her breast is cut off. Pūtanā roars and falls dead on the ground, which awakens the villagers. They are afraid of Pūtanā, and also of Kāmsa. There are three things that really stand out here in comparison with other versions: Pūtanā is a bird, even having breasts which function like mammalian breasts; the villagers are frightened

all the time; and there is no means specified with which Pūtanā could kill Kṛṣṇa. It is not even mentioned that Pūtanā comes to kill Kṛṣṇa: she merely nurses him.

APur functions as a summary, except that it has elements that are not mentioned anywhere else, and therefore cannot be linked to any category. Pūtanā is, together with other demonesses, ordered by Kāmsa to kill all children. Kṛṣṇa kills her by sucking out her breast milk. Those are the only elements mentioned, and they are different from all other versions: other demonesses are also ordered by Kāmsa, and Kṛṣṇa does not drain her life or poison but her breast milk. However, in the whole myth of Kṛṣṇa we find all kinds of demons that are sent to kill him, like the cart demon Sakatasura and the whirlwind demon Trinavarta.<sup>47</sup> It might be the case that APur refers to this. In that case it is more in line with the other versions, and is it just taking the broader myth into account.

PPur is a version that seems to stand alone. It sticks close to the core tale, while also combining elements from the Bhaktic and Night versions. Pūtanā the child killer is ordered by Kāmsa to kill Kṛṣṇa. She comes at night with poison in her breast. Kṛṣṇa knows her to be a demoness, and sucks out her life violently. Pūtanā's tendons are cut, and she falls dead to the ground while roaring. The villagers find Kṛṣṇa playing on Pūtanā's breasts, and are afraid of her form. Kṛṣṇa is picked up and cleansed, and Pūtanā's body is burned. There are a few details that are not present in the core version: that Kṛṣṇa knows Pūtanā to be a demoness, that Pūtanā's tendons are cut, and that Pūtanā's body is burned. Two elements are exclusively shared with the Bhaktic versions: that Pūtanā's breast is poisoned, and that Pūtanā's body is burned. It shares one element exclusively with the Night versions: that Kṛṣṇa sucks Pūtanā's breast violently.

### 2.3 Comparison

Using Sharma's principle of 'reciprocal illumination', I would now like to compare the story of Hēraklēs and Kṛṣṇa with each other. The core similar elements are the motif: the ill-willed nursing woman who is harmed. What we now shall see is how both stories seem to have structural similarities, but are endowed with different details that sometimes oppose each other. Six elements of this structural similarity will be analyzed here: the identity of the nurse; the content of the breast; the deception; the harm done; the gift; and the aftermath. The results of this analysis are summarized in figure 3.

First of all we in both stories we see a nurse who is a supernatural ill-willed female: Hēra in the case of Hēraklēs, and Pūtanā in the case of Kṛṣṇa. Both are supernatural beings: Pūtanā is a demoness (*rākṣasī* in BgPur 16:4), and Hēra is a goddess. This gives a difference in status, although both could be said to have a demonic nature in their ill will towards their respective protagonists. Slater states

<sup>47</sup> Goswamy and A. Dallapiccola (1982), pp. 34-36.

that Hēra 'cannot be portrayed as a demon' like Pūtanā because she is a goddess,<sup>48</sup> which is something that becomes apparent in the treatment after the nursing.

	<b>Hēraklēs</b>	<b>Kṛṣṇa</b>
<b>Nurse</b>	Supernatural ill-willed female	Supernatural ill-willed female
<b>Breast</b>	Milk (Slater: poison is displaced)	Poison
<b>Deception</b>	Hēra is deceived	Pūtanā deceives
<b>Harm</b>	Hēra pain or loss of status	Pūtanā dies
<b>Gift</b>	Hēraklēs gains glory/immortality or Milky Way	Pūtanā is liberated (Bhaktic)
<b>Aftermath</b>	Hēraklēs gains glory/immortality	Kṛṣṇa must be cleansed

Figure 3: *reciprocal illumination*

While Hēra is a recurrent goddess in myths, Pūtanā only makes an appearance in this scene, and is given a wider context only by being called a child killer. Hēra and Pūtanā do not have the same familial relation to their respective protagonist either. Pūtanā has no familial relation with Kṛṣṇa whatsoever; only the relation with Kaṁsa is mentioned. Hēra also has no blood relation with Hēraklēs, but since Hēraklēs is the son of Zeus and Alkmēnē,<sup>49</sup> and Hēra is the wife of Zeus, Hēra is the stepmother of Hēraklēs. There is no relational equivalent for Hēra in the story of Kṛṣṇa: Yaśodā is Kṛṣṇa's foster mother<sup>50</sup> and not his stepmother, and Devakī is Kṛṣṇa's biological mother,<sup>51</sup> and therefore more relatable to Alkmēnē.

Also the relationship of the protagonist with his parents is different in the stories of Hēraklēs and Kṛṣṇa. Hēraklēs remains with his biological mother throughout most of his childhood,<sup>52</sup> something which is uncommon for a heroic figure according to many scholars.<sup>53</sup> Kṛṣṇa is brought away for his safety, and is therefore not reared by his biological parents. This gives an interesting parallel between both biological mothers: Devakī brings Kṛṣṇa to safety because otherwise he will be killed by Kaṁsa,<sup>54</sup> while Alkmēnē is afraid of Hēra's jealousy and therefore abandons Hēraklēs in DS-HB 4.9:6. This also gives a parallel between Alkmēnē and Yaśodā: as Alkmēnē abandoned Hēraklēs, so was Yaśodā unable to stop Pūtanā in her attempt on Kṛṣṇa's life in BgPur 10.6:9 and HV 2.6:33-34.

The character of Athēnē has a unique function: DS-HB 4.9:6 Athēnē saves Hēraklēs by persuading Hēra to nurse him. Athēnē likewise helps Hēraklēs more often in his life,<sup>55</sup> while Kṛṣṇa has no such general female helper. However, Athēnē is alike

<sup>48</sup> Slater (1968), p. 350.

<sup>49</sup> Stafford (2012), p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Goswamy and A. Dallapiccola (1982), p. 29.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>52</sup> Stafford (2012), p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> For example: Campbell (2004), p. 300; Rank (1959), p. 65; Raglan (1979), p. 174.

<sup>54</sup> Goswamy and Dalalpiccola, "The narrative," 28.

<sup>55</sup> Slater (1968), p. 342.

Kaṁsa by persuading someone to nurse the protagonist, although Athēnē's intent is good-willed while Kaṁsa wishes to kill Kṛṣṇa.

When we look at the content of the breast, we see that Hēra's breast contains milk, while Pūtanā's breast is smeared with poison (in BgPur 10.6:10, BVPur 4.10:1-12, and PPur 6.245:71-87) or causes death when suckled from it at night (in the Night versions). Slater claims something different: in the Greek story Hēra's poison is placed in a later moment in the narrative of Hēraklēs (when Hēraklēs injures Hēra in her right breast during a battle) and to other creatures (the hydra).<sup>56</sup> However, I think Slater is underestimating the role the milk plays in the narrative, a matter which we shall delve into shortly (see below).

Both stories deal with deception in some way, although in fundamentally different ways. The element of deception is most clear in the myth of Hēraklēs: Hēra is deceived in nursing Hēraklēs in PsE-K 44, P-HP 9.25:2, and H-A 2:43. L-A 1322 does not provide this detail, while it might also be found in DS-BH 4.9:6, where it is mentioned that Hēraklēs tugs at Hēra's breast with 'greater violence than would be expected at his age'. In that case, Hēra is deceived due to underestimating Hēraklēs' strength. The deception is discovered by Hēra, and she throws Hēraklēs off in the astronomical versions and the P-HP. In the story of Hēraklēs, therefore, the deception is aimed at Hēra.

This is wholly different in the story of Kṛṣṇa: Pūtanā is the one who deceives here. In the Bhaktic versions she takes on the form of a woman to deceive everyone. In all other versions her appearance is concealed by the darkness of the night (except in APur, which probably ignores this detail due to it being a summary). BVPur 4.10:13-29 enhances this deception, because Pūtanā gives a false identity as the wife of a Brāhmin from Mathurā. In BgPur 10.6:5-6 the gopīs (cowherdresses) give Pūtanā this false identity, by calling her Lakṣmī. In BVPur 4.10:13-29 this given identity can be Lakṣmī or Durgā. In two versions it is explicitly stated that Kṛṣṇa sees through Pūtanā's disguise (BgPur 10.6:8 and PPur 6.245:71-87), and the concealment is lifted in two ways after Pūtanā's death: she takes on her original form (Bhaktic versions), or the villagers are awakened (Night versions and HV 2.6:27). BVPur 4.10:30-45 turns the disguise around: Pūtanā is said to be a nymph in the guise of a demoness, for she received liberation by Kṛṣṇa.

The harm done is a very minor element in the Greek story. Hēra has pain because Hēraklēs sucks too hard on her breast, or she is harmed by losing some of her prestige, since she is deceived and fell for it. While the harm done to Hēra is minor in this respect, it will be fatal for Pūtanā: she dies. Pūtanā's breast might also have hurt, since it is mentioned in BgPur and BPur that Kṛṣṇa squeezes it hard. This is however not an exact parallel with Hēra: it is not mentioned that Pūtanā feels pain due to this squeezing, and Hēra's pain is due to Hēraklēs sucking too hard.

<sup>56</sup> Slater (1968), pp. 349-350.

Next we turn to the gift. In the Greek story, the gift appears in two forms. In the first form, Hēra elevates Hēraklēs' status to 'the glory of Hēra' (which is the name that is granted him after this scene according to DS-BH), which is interpreted as immortality by Slater<sup>57</sup> and Loraux.<sup>58</sup> In this way the Greek story confirms to Miller's description of the wet nurse that provides the protagonist with special abilities.<sup>59</sup> This also confirms to Propp's element F7: 'the hero acquires the use of a magical agent'<sup>60</sup> by eating or drinking it,<sup>61</sup> In the astronomic versions we find that Hēra's spilled milk is the origin of the Milky Way. This is different in the Indian story: while the protagonist is gifted something in the Greek story, in the Indian story the protagonist gives something to the nurse. In the Bhaktic versions we find Kṛṣṇa liberating Pūtanā due to the contact they have been in.

Lastly, in the aftermath of the story we see a concern with status. In the Greek story Hēraklēs, a half-god, comes into contact with Hēra, a goddess proper. This is beneficial for Hēraklēs, because his status will be heightened, which becomes apparent in gaining glory or immortality. This is the opposite in the Indian story. Here Kṛṣṇa, a god incarnate, comes into contact with Pūtanā, a demoness. Because Kṛṣṇa's status is lowered due to this he has to be cleansed by an elaborate ritual procedure, which happens in the Night versions, BgPur, and PPur.

## 2.4 A Proppian Counter-Argument

We have already seen that Propp's element F7 is present in the story of Hēraklēs and absent in that of Kṛṣṇa. When we look at both stories more closely with regards to Propp's morphology, we get two rather different patterns. For Hēraklēs, the pattern is B<sup>6</sup>F7; for Kṛṣṇa it is η<sup>3</sup>I<sup>5</sup>. The first element in the story of Hēraklēs is B<sup>6</sup>: 'the hero condemned to death is secretly freed'.<sup>62</sup> The abandoned Hēraklēs is saved by Hēra, and thus this element applies. F7 stands for 'the hero acquires the use of a magical agent',<sup>63</sup> by means of drinking Hēra's milk.<sup>64</sup> F<sup>1</sup> ('the agent is directly transferred')<sup>65</sup> and F<sup>5</sup> ('the agent falls into the hands of the hero by chance')<sup>66</sup> also apply: the immortality is directly transferred by drinking Hēra's milk, and Hēraklēs was not actively seeking for it. We could only say that others anticipated on this transference by persuading or deceiving Hēra, who is an unfriendly donor<sup>67</sup> who wishes to kill Hēraklēs later on.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 345.

<sup>58</sup> Loraux (1995), p. 132.

<sup>59</sup> Miller (2000), p. 95.

<sup>60</sup> Propp (1968), p. 43.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-45.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

The first element in the story of Kṛṣṇa is the preliminary element η<sup>3</sup>: 'the villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or his belongings'.<sup>69</sup> Pūtanā wishes to kill Kṛṣṇa by taking on a disguise or hide in the darkness of the night and by applying poison to her breast, which could be counted as another means instead of persuasion or magic.<sup>70</sup> I<sup>5</sup> states that the villain is defeated without a fight.<sup>71</sup> Pūtanā's nursing is an attempt to murder Kṛṣṇa, but it cannot be a fight.

In this way it has become clear that both stories have a different narrative structure when using Propp's morphology, since Propp's analysis is mainly used to show how narrative developments relate to each other. What this essentially shows is that both stories have a different function from each other in the narrative of which they are only a small part. I would consider this an interesting counter-argument, but one could claim that Propp cannot be used in this way, since Propp only created his morphology of folk tales *for folk tales*, and not for myths. This would mean that this counter-argument is not valid when one would be inclined to see a definitive difference between myths and folk tales.

Even with this remark in mind, I think the Proppian counter-argument shows something very interesting and relevant: while on itself the motif of both stories show a similar structure, the place of the motif in the structure of the full mythology of both figures is strikingly different. But these differences can also be reconciled in a very interesting way, albeit only for some versions. The Proppian elements in the story of Hēraklēs focus on Hēraklēs himself: he is saved and gains something. In the story of Kṛṣṇa, the Proppian elements refer to Pūtanā: she deceives and is beaten without a fight. In this sense, Pūtanā seems to become the character of focus in this particular story within Kṛṣṇa's mythology. If we take it that way, then we can see a similarity between Hēraklēs on the one hand and Pūtanā in the Bhaktic versions on the other: their status is elevated. Hēraklēs becomes immortal from being a mere half-god, and the demoness Pūtanā becomes liberated. After all, we must remind ourselves that even though the structural place is different, this does not mean that the motifs are different.

### 3. Conclusion

We have seen that the stories of Hēraklēs and Kṛṣṇa share a basic core: an ill-willed supernatural female deceives or is deceived and consequently nurses the protagonist, something which causes her harm. This motif does not seem to be present anywhere else, thus making it a unique case study. It is therefore not fitting to call this an Indo-European mythological motif. It might, however, be a mythological motif belonging to the dialect group comprising Indo-Iranian, Armenian, and Hellenic languages. This claim must however be substantiated by more evidence. Reciprocal illumination shows that both stories share a general

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>70</sup> Propp (1968), p. 30.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

structure, and six elements are present in this: the identity of the nurse; the content of the breast; the deception; the harm done; the gift; and the aftermath.

This analysis is not complete, however, and can be improved on two fronts. First of all original non-translated texts were only sporadically used, meaning that hardly any attention could be paid to diction. This might be important when we take Sadovski's comment into account: since Witzel's *The Origin of the World's Mythologies*<sup>72</sup> we cannot claim Indo-European origin for a motif purely on typological similarity, but we must also look at diction, whether it is described with a similar phraseology.<sup>73</sup>

Secondly, the focus in mythological studies is mainly based on literary and, where possible, oral texts. An approach that might give interesting insights in the study of mythology is looking at pictorial sources as well. Mallory already shows us how archaeology and linguistics had a hard time relating their results with reference to the proto-Indo-European homeland with each other.<sup>74</sup> This divide might also be present in comparative mythology: linguists tend to focus on texts, and archaeologists on pictorial sources. Combining both fields might be hard but potentially fruitful. And in this endeavor we should not fall into the fallacy of giving primacy to the texts. Houtman and Meyer propagate the 'material turn' in the study of religion, which for us would mean looking more closely at the material dimension of the myths we study. This means for example the study of the enactment of myths (for example in ritual), the material conditions where we find a text (on a scroll stored away or as an inscription in public), and most obviously pictures. The textual focus and the immaterial approach to it is a very Protestant bias,<sup>75</sup> and we should give equal weight to what pictures can tell us about the story. Pictures do not merely depict a story, but tell it in a different way: what scenes are highlighted as important, and which scenes are depicted so as to make sure the audience identifies it as the correct myth?

In this case attention could for example be given to the lekythos depicting the nursing of Hēraklēs (London F107) among others, and the many depictions of Kṛṣṇa and Pūtanā that we find in India. The reason I have neglected this investigation here is that I believe this task should not be undertaken lightly. Analysing images, just like analyzing texts, should be undertaken with a sound methodology: you should know what you are doing. At this point I have never analysed images before, and here I would do it without any proper background knowledge and methodology. This is a task that is therefore, regrettably, left for future research.

On a more general note we might also conclude that analysis of different similarities between Kṛṣṇa and Hēraklēs might not only be interesting but give more

<sup>72</sup> Witzel (2012).

<sup>73</sup> Velizar Sadovski, personal communication, July 20, 2016.

<sup>74</sup> Mallory (1989), p. 164.

<sup>75</sup> Houtman and B. Meyer (2012), pp. 9-10.

sustenance to the general claim of the affinity between the two figures. This article has shown only one motif in detail, and more research is needed to show how and if these two figures are specifically related to each other, in contrast to other mythological figures that are often equated with one of the two (or both of them). If we further would like to argue for a 'dialectal mythology' of Indo-Iranian, Hellenic, and Armenian languages, then we have to trace this motif back to Iranian and Armenian sources as well. We have already seen, however, that David of Sassoun is not a total fit with regards to this specific motif. Nevertheless, these suggestions give us ample directions for future research.

## References

### **Translations: Greek sources**

Condos, Theony. 1970, 'The Katasterismoï (part ii),' *Astronomical Society of the Pacific Leaflet* 497, pp. 369-376.

Diodorus of Sicily. *Library of History (books iii – viii)*. Translated by C.H. Oldfather (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), accessed February 14, 2015.

<http://www.theoi.com/Text/DiodorusSiculus4A.html#8>.

Hyginus, Gaius Julius. *The Myths of Hyginus*. Translated by Mary Grant (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1960), accessed February 14, 2015.

<http://www.theoi.com/Text/HyginusAstronomica2.html#43>.

Lycophron. "Alexandra," in *Callimachus, Hymns and Epigrams. Lycophron. Aratus*. Translated by A.W. Mair and G.R. Mair (London: William Heinemann, 1921), accessed March 24, 2015.

<http://www.theoi.com/Text/LycophronAlexandra3.html>.

Pausanias. *Description of Greece*. Translated by W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Omerod (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918), accessed February 14, 2015.

<http://www.theoi.com/Text/Pausanias9B.html#7>.

### **Translations: Indian sources**

*Agni Purāṇam (a prose English translation) vol. 1*. Translated by Manmatha Nāth Dutt Shastrī. Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1967.

*A prose English translation of Vishnupuranam*. Translated by Manmatha Nath Dutt. Calcutta: Elysium Press, 1896.

*Brahma Purāṇa. Part ii*. Translated by J.L. Shastri. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985.

*Brahma-Vaivarta Puranam. Ganesa and Krisna janma khandas*. Translated by Rajendra Nath Sen. Allahabad: Sudhindra Nath Vasu, 1922.

*Harivamsha Parva*. Translated by A. Purushothaman and A. Harindranath, accessed February 14, 2015.

[http://mahabharata-resources.org/harivamsa/vishnuparva/hv\\_2\\_006.html](http://mahabharata-resources.org/harivamsa/vishnuparva/hv_2_006.html).

Narasimhan, Chakravarthi. *The Mahābhārata. An English version based on selected verses*. New York/London: Columbia University Press, 1965.

*The Padma Purāṇa. Part ix.* Translated by N.A. Deshpande. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Pvt. Ltd., 1956.

*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Tenth canto 'the summum bonum' (part two – ch. 6-12).* Translated by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Worcester: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1977.

*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 'the story of the fortunate one'.* Translated by Anand Aadhar Prabhu, accessed February 14, 2015.  
<http://www.srimadbhagavatam.org/canto10/chapter6.html>.

*The Vishnu Purana. A system of Hindu mythology and tradition.* Translated by H.H. Wilson. Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1961. First published 1840 by John Murray.

### **Translations: other**

*David of Sassoun. The Armenian Folk Epic in Four Cycles.* Translated by Artin Shalian. New York: Ohio University Press, 1964.

### **Secondary literature**

Acharya, Diwakar. 2013, 'How to Behave like a Bull? New Insight into the Origin and Religious Practices of Pāsupatas.' *Indo-Iranian Journal* 56, pp. 101-131.

Allen, Nick. 2010, 'Hephaestus and Agni. Gods and men on the battlefield in Greek and Sanskrit epics.' In *New perspectives on myth*, edited by Wim van Binsbergen and Eric Venbrux, pp. 357-372. Haarlem/Nijmegen: Shikanda.

Bernabé, Alberto. 1995, 'Influences orientales dans la littérature grecque: reflexions de methode'. *Kernos* 8, pp. 9-22.

Bryant, Edwin (ed.). 2007, *Krishna. A sourcebook*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Campbell, Joseph. 2004, *The hero with a thousand faces*. Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press. First published 1949 by Pantheon Books.

Condos, Theony. 1970a, 'The Katasterismoi (part i)', *Astronomical Society of the Pacific Leaflet* 496, pp. 361-368.

Dahlquist, Allan. 1962, *Megasthenes and Indian Religion*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Doniger, Wendy. 1975, *Hindu Myths. A Sourcebook Translated from the Sanskrit*. London: Penguin Books.

Fletcher, Kristopher. 2013, 'Hyginus' Fabulae: toward a Roman mythography.' In *Writing myth. Mythography in the ancient world*, edited by Stephen M. Trzaskoma and R. Scott Smith, pp. 133-164. Leuven: Peeters.

Fraser, Peter. 2003, 'Lycophron.' In *Who's who in the Classical World*, edited by Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gantz, Timothy. *Early Greek myth. A guide to literary and artistic sources. Volume one*. Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Godine, David (ed.). 1982, *Krishna. The divine lover. Myth and legend through Indian art*. London: Serindia Publications.

Gonda, Jan. 1960, *Die Religionen Indiens. I Veda und älterer Hinduismus*. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag.

Houtman, Dick, and Birgit Meyer. 2012, 'Introduction: Material Religion – How Things Matter.' In *Things: Religion and the Question of Materiality*, edited by Dick Houtman and Birgit Meyer. New York: Fordham University Press.

Huys, Marc. 1995, *The tale of the hero who was exposed at birth in Euripidean tragedy. A study of motifs*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.

Katz, Joshua. 2005, 'The Indo-European context.' In *A companion to ancient epic*, edited by John Miley Foley, pp. 20-30. Malden/Oxford/Victoria: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Lewis, Brian. 1980, *The Sargon legend. A study of the Akkadian text and the tale of the hero who was exposed at birth*. Cambridge: American School of Oriental Research.

Loroux, Nicole. 1995, *The experiences of Tiresias. The feminine and the Greek man*. Translated by Paula Wissing. Princeton: Princeton University Press. First published 1989 by Gallimard.

Mallory, J.P. 1989, *In Search of the Indo-Europeans: Language, Archaeology and Myth*. London: Thames and Hudson.

McCrindle, John. 1877, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenês and Arrian*. London: Trübner & Co.

Miller, Dean. 2000, *The epic hero*. Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Papanicolaou-Christensen, Aristeia. 2003, *The Panathenaic stadium. Its history over the centuries*. Athens: Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece.

Propp, Vladímir. 1968, *Morphology of the folktale*. Austin: University of Texas Press. First published 1928 by Academia.

Raglan. 1979, *The hero. A study in tradition, myth, and drama*. New York: Meridian Books. First published 1936 by Pitman Publishing Ltd.

Rank, Otto. 1959, *The myth of the birth of the hero and other writings*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc.

Robertson, John. 1910, *Christianity and mythology. Second edition, revised and expanded*. London: Watts & Co.

Sharma, Arvind. 2005, *Religious studies and comparative methodology. The case for reciprocal illumination*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Slater, Philip. 1968, *The glory of Hera. Greek mythology and the Greek family*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Spawforth, Antony. 2003, 'Pausanias the Periegete.' In *Who's who in the Classical World*, edited by Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stafford, Emma. 2012, *Herakles*. London/New York: Routledge.

Sulimani, Iris. 2011, *Diodorus' Mythistory and the Pagan Mission. Historiography and Culture-heroes in the First Pentad of the Bibliotheke*. Leiden: Brill.

West, Martin. 2007, *Indo-European poetry and myth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Witzel, Michael. 2012, *The origins of the world's mythologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.