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**MYTHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION:  
INTERCONNECTING POINTS**

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*This article explores the enduring relationship between mythology and philosophical reflection, examining how myths have influenced and shaped philosophical thought throughout history and their continued relevance in modern discourse. Through a qualitative analysis of existing literature and theoretical perspectives, the study highlights the resurgence of mythology in contemporary philosophical movements, particularly during times of social and existential crises. The article argues that myths serve as foundational narratives that inform ethical, existential, and social reflections, offering insights where rationalism falls short. It also discusses the dual role of mythology as both a tool for philosophical inquiry and a mechanism for societal cohesion and control. The findings underscore the importance of myths in shaping collective identities, political ideologies, and ethical considerations, thereby influencing the very fabric of society. By bridging the gap between logic and emotion, mythology remains a crucial framework for*

*understanding the deeper dimensions of existence, particularly in periods of transition and uncertainty.*

**Keywords:** *myth, mythology, philosophy, philosophical reflection, narrative, worldview.*

*Доктор філософських наук, професор, завідувач кафедри соціальної філософії, філософії освіти та освітньої політики Вашкевич Віктор Миколайович; професор кафедри психології, філософія та соціальні дисципліни Заблоцький Віталій Петрович, Міфологія та філософська рефлексія: точки взаємозв'язку/ Український державний університет імені Михайла Драгоманова; Таврійський національний університет імені В. І. Вернадського, Київ, Україна.*

*У цій статті досліджується тривалий зв'язок між міфологією та філософською рефлексією, досліджується, як міфи впливали та формували філософську думку протягом історії та їх актуальність у сучасному дискурсі. Завдяки якісному аналізу існуючої літератури та теоретичних поглядів, дослідження підкреслює відродження міфології в сучасних філософських рухах, особливо під час соціальних та екзистенціальних криз. У статті стверджується, що міфи служать основоположними наративами, які інформують про етичні, екзистенціальні та соціальні рефлексії, пропонуючи зрозуміти, де раціоналізму не вистачає. У ньому також обговорюється подвійна роль міфології як інструменту для філософського дослідження та механізму суспільної згуртованості та контролю. Отримані дані підкреслюють важливість міфів у формуванні колективних ідентичностей, політичних ідеологій та етичних міркувань, впливаючи таким чином на саму структуру суспільства. Долаючи розрив між логікою та емоціями, міфологія залишається важливою*

*основою для розуміння глибших вимірів існування, особливо в періоді переходу та невизначеності.*

*Ключові слова: міф, міфологія, філософія, філософська рефлексія, наратив, світогляд.*

**Introduction.** Mythology is one of the oldest and most exciting parts of the spiritual heritage of humankind. It is closely intertwined with ancestors' and daily lives, reflecting their desire to live harmoniously with nature and the surrounding world. Myths about gods, natural phenomena, and the world's origin have a special place in human culture. The relationship between mythology and philosophy has always been fascinating, offering valuable insights into how humans perceive and understand reality. Myths are often seen as stories full of symbolism and imagination, playing an essential role in shaping how societies think and behave. On the other hand, philosophy, with its pursuit of logical reasoning and analytical thinking, has sought to answer life's profound questions. This article dives into the unique connections between these two realms, showing how myths like the story of Prometheus and Epimetheus reflect cultural beliefs and serve as crucial foundations for philosophical thought.

For thousands of years, myths have been the stories people turned to for answers about life, death, nature, and the divine. They helped explain the world when little else could. As human thinking evolved, philosophy emerged from these mythic roots, seeking to provide more precise, more reasoned explanations. But here's the exciting part: despite the rise of philosophy as a field of logical inquiry, myths didn't fade into the background. They've continued to influence and inspire philosophical thinking across generations.

Today, the connection between mythology and philosophy feels as relevant as ever. In times of crisis or significant change, people often return to ancient or newly—formed myths to help make sense of their experiences.

Even in a world shaped by science and rational thought, there's still something about mythological thinking that resonates deeply with our need to understand life's mysteries. By exploring how these two ways of thinking overlap and support one another, this article will show that myths remain a powerful force in philosophical reflection, helping us navigate the complexities of our modern world challenges.

### **Literature Review**

The relationship between mythology and philosophy has been the subject of increasing scholarly attention, particularly as both fields explore fundamental questions about existence, meaning, and society. Historically, myths have been regarded as pre-philosophical narratives that offer symbolic and allegorical explanations of the world. At the same time, philosophy is seen as a more rational and systematic inquiry into the nature of reality. However, recent academic discourse highlights that the boundaries between mythology and philosophy are more porous than previously thought.

Scholars argue that mythology provides the original framework from which philosophical ideas emerge. Delanda [2] articulates that myths act as foundational narratives, offering early societies a lens to understand their existence and place in the cosmos. This view is supported by Falasca-Zamponi [4], who examines the role of myths in shaping political ideologies, particularly within fascist regimes. According to Falasca-Zamponi, myths serve as cultural artifacts and critical tools for ideological manipulation, deeply embedded within philosophical discourse.

Similarly, Matravers [12] suggests that mythology, with its rich symbolic and narrative structures, laid the groundwork for philosophy's later attempts to grapple with universal human experiences. These myths provided a means for early societies to engage with concepts of life, death, and the divine-questions that would later form the foundation of philosophical inquiry.

This alignment between myth and philosophy is echoed in the phenomenological approach of Qutoshi [16], who suggests that mythology remains relevant in understanding lived experiences, particularly in moments of existential reflection.

The crisis of rationalism in the 19th and 20th centuries reintroduced mythology as a significant tool for philosophical reflection. As Tretiak [19] argues, the limitations of scientific and technical reasoning, particularly in addressing complex social and existential issues, led to the resurgence of mythological thinking within various philosophical movements, such as existentialism and personalism. Tretiak's analysis highlights that mythological archetypes, deeply embedded in human consciousness, became essential to understanding the profound social transformations of the time.

This resurgence of mythology is not merely a reaction to rationalism's failure but also reflects the role of myth in addressing the limitations of purely logical and empirical thought. As Delanda [2] and others suggest, mythology offers a means to explore dimensions of human existence that rational inquiry struggles to address – such as spirituality, morality, and the search for meaning in times of uncertainty.

Beyond philosophical systems, myths profoundly impact societal structures and individual identity formation. In psychological contexts, myths also serve as powerful influencers of behavior and perception. Suárez and Gadalla's [18] meta-analysis of rape myths underscores how these narratives perpetuate harmful societal attitudes, including victim-blaming. This research reveals the psychological impact of myths, showing how deeply ingrained stories can influence justice systems and societal norms.

Recent philosophical inquiry has also revisited the narrative structures of mythology, recognizing them as central to human cognition and societal meaning-making. Matravers [12] emphasizes that fictional narratives,

including myths, are crucial to the development of shared human experiences, which are, in turn, foundational to philosophical discourse. This perspective aligns with broader theories in the philosophy of language and narrative, where the symbolic elements of myth are seen as essential to understanding and communicating philosophical ideas.

Interestingly, the influence of mythology extends even into scientific discourse. Kastner [9] examines the transactional interpretation of quantum mechanics, which challenges traditional scientific narratives of causality and time. This example highlights the ongoing relevance of mythological thinking in areas typically dominated by empirical inquiry. Kastner's work suggests that mythology continues to offer a way of understanding concepts that science alone may not fully explain, bridging the gap between empirical knowledge and philosophical speculation.

### **Methodology**

This study explores the intricate relationship between mythology and philosophical reflection, investigating how myths influence contemporary philosophical discourse and shape societal understanding of existential and ethical questions. The following research question guides the study:

1. What are the interconnections between mythology and philosophical reflections?
2. How do myths continue influencing and shaping philosophical reflection in contemporary thought, particularly during social change and crisis?

The study adopts a qualitative approach to address this question, combining textual analysis and theoretical synthesis. The methodology explores the thematic intersections between mythology and philosophy, focusing on historical and contemporary examples.

### **Results and Discussion**

Mythology has long fascinated philosophers, scholars, and cultural theorists, primarily because of its profound influence on human understanding of the world and its role in shaping philosophical thought. The relationship between mythology and philosophy is complex, with myths often providing foundational narratives that inform philosophical inquiries into existence, ethics, and social values. The study explores how mythology has influenced philosophical reflection throughout history and its continuing relevance in contemporary discourse, highlighting several interconnecting points described below.

### ***Resurgence of Mythology in Contemporary Philosophy***

The first key finding of this study is the resurgence of mythology as a tool for philosophical reflection in the modern era, particularly during periods of social and existential crisis. Contemporary philosophical movements like existentialism and postmodernism frequently draw on mythological narratives to explore the human condition.

For instance, existentialist philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus reappropriated ancient myths to address the absurdity of life and the search for meaning. Camus' use of the myth of Sisyphus, in particular, exemplifies how myths serve as metaphors for existential struggles. Similarly, postmodern thinkers such as Lyotard and Derrida examine how myths shape collective narratives in a world where traditional structures of meaning have collapsed.

This finding aligns with Tretiak's [19] argument that mythology re-emerges during societal change because it offers frameworks for grappling with uncertainties and contradictions that rational discourse alone cannot resolve. Myths thus continue to provide existential and philosophical significance in crises such as global conflicts, environmental catastrophes, and technological disruptions.

### ***Myth as a Response to the Limits of Rationalism***

Another significant result of the analysis is that mythology offers a counterbalance to the limits of rationalism, which became apparent during the scientific and technological advancements of the 19th and 20th centuries. Philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche criticized the over-reliance on rationalism, arguing that mythological thinking captures the emotional and irrational aspects of human existence that reason alone cannot address.

Myth is a necessary counterpart to rational thought in many contemporary philosophical frameworks. Nietzsche's revival of the Dionysian myth, representing chaos, passion, and the irrational aspects of life, contrasts sharply with the Apollonian ideal of order and reason. The persistence of such dichotomies in modern philosophy suggests that myths help fill the gaps left by rationalism by addressing aspects of the human experience that resist logical explanation—such as death, suffering, and transcendence. This finding is also evident in the works of existentialist philosophers, who use myths to explore themes of freedom, despair, and individual choice. In times of crisis, when rational systems fail to provide satisfying answers, myths offer a way to express the unresolvable tensions of human existence, thereby reaffirming their relevance in philosophical discourse.

### ***Mythology's Role in Shaping Social and Political Ideologies***

The third significant finding is that myths influence social and political ideologies, often serving as ideological manipulation or resistance tools. Myths are philosophical constructs and robust social control and cohesion instruments.

For example, Falasca-Zamponi [4] shows how fascist regimes used mythological imagery and narratives to construct nationalistic ideologies, creating a sense of historical continuity and divine purpose. These myths

were instrumental in shaping collective identities and legitimizing authoritarian power structures. Similarly, modern political movements frequently draw on mythic symbols and narratives to mobilize support and create a unified vision of the future.

This political use of mythology underscores its dual nature as a source of philosophical reflection and a practical tool for societal organization. Myths inspire deep philosophical inquiry but can also be exploited to enforce conformity or justify oppressive systems. Understanding this duality is crucial in recognizing how myths influence thought and action in contemporary society.

### ***Myth's Contribution to Ethical Reflection***

Another significant result is the contribution of mythology to ethical reflection. The analysis shows that myths often serve as moral and ethical guides, offering narratives that explore the consequences of human actions and the nature of justice, duty, and morality.

Philosophers such as Aristotle and Immanuel Kant employed mythological examples to illustrate ethical principles, and this tradition persists in contemporary moral debates. Myths provide allegories for philosophical questions about the good life, virtue, and the nature of suffering. For example, the myth of Prometheus, who suffers for bringing knowledge to humanity, is often used to explore ethical questions about sacrifice, responsibility, and the pursuit of knowledge. This shows that myths are not just theoretical constructs but have tangible effects on societal ethics and practices, often reinforcing or challenging existing norms.

### ***Myth as a Means of Coping with Transition and Crisis***

Finally, the study found that myths are particularly potent in periods of transition and crisis, acting as frameworks for individuals and societies to cope with uncertainty. As Delanda [2] and Tretiak [19] highlight, myths re-

emerge in times of upheaval because they offer a way to make sense of the unknown and re-establish order in a chaotic world.

This role of myth as a coping mechanism is particularly evident in contemporary crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and global climate change. Whether ancient or newly formed, myths provide narratives that help individuals and communities navigate the fear, uncertainty, and ambiguity accompanying such global challenges. By offering symbolic explanations for events beyond human control, myths allow for a sense of understanding and, to some extent, control.

### **Discussion**

This study's findings emphasize mythology's enduring relevance in philosophical reflection. While myths may have originated as pre-scientific explanations for natural phenomena, they provide rich material for exploring the more profound questions of existence, especially in social and existential crises. Far from being obsolete in an age of reason, myths complement philosophical inquiry by addressing dimensions of the human experience that rational thought alone cannot fully grasp.

Moreover, myths serve as philosophical tools and instruments for social organization, ethical reflection, and coping with change. The dual role of mythology—a source of deep philosophical insight and a practical tool for societal cohesion—highlights its complexity and ongoing significance. As the world continues to face new challenges, studying mythology's relationship with philosophy will remain crucial in understanding how individuals and societies navigate the complexities of modern life.

For a long time, historians of philosophy have considered its development from lower, pre-philosophical, mythological, theological forms to rigidly rationalized philosophical systems (like Hegel's) as a natural progressive process of awakening consciousness. However, the crisis of rationalism and the emergence of a post-classical style of philosophizing,

irrationalism, have shown that this is far from the case. The archetypes of mythological images preserved in the ancestral memory of humanity have become the main form of their philosophical constructions for existentialism, personalism, philosophy of life, and other movements. Why did this happen? Firstly, perhaps, there is a general disappointment in the capabilities of the scientific and technical mind to answer the complex questions of life, not so much of society as of individuals who found themselves hostage. Secondly, the aggravation of social contradictions and the emergence of various social cataclysms in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could not be comprehended using the old and objectivist philosophical paradigm. Third, and in my opinion, most importantly, the development of history shows that the mythologization of consciousness intensifies precisely at the turn of epochs, that is, in transitional periods. However, philosophy, its basic concepts, and categories contain a mythological element because it emerged from mythology.

Mythology, the first form of social and individual consciousness, has been studied extensively (mainly Egyptian, ancient Greek, and Slavic mythology). However, the traditional concepts in mythology and religion later passed into philosophy and remain in it today. Only the means and methods of answering them, which arose due to the development of science and social practice, have changed, and the more profound meaning has essentially remained the same. Suppose we reject the myths that reflected a certain degree of cognition and representation of primitive man and man of early class societies as historically experienced. What remains today in the myths that in our transitional time seem to have resurrected again, causing a total mythologization of the present both at the everyday and scientific and especially socio-political levels, as well as at the level of economics and business, despite their bare realism, pragmatism, and practicality.

Perhaps it is the eternal mystery and inexhaustibility of the human spirit, its eternal desire to go beyond the given, to comprehend it in the integrity and simultaneous multidimensionality of the manifestations of existence. Since philosophical concepts are symbolic concepts in which not only purely scientific and cognitive experience is compressed, but humanity's entire spiritual and practical experience in its more profound dimensions, which manifests itself through reflexivity, myth cannot be eliminated from philosophy. In other words, in search of new meanings, myth seems to be the first to find ways to cognize new horizons of being to spiritually and practically master the world.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, mythology remains an integral part of philosophical reflection, transcending time to address the complexities of human existence. As this study represents, myths have evolved from early explanations of the world to sophisticated narratives that inform ethical, social, and philosophical discourse. They counterbalance the limits of rational thought, providing frameworks for understanding emotions, crises, and the irrational aspects of life. Whether in existential debates or social ideologies, myths shape human cognition and societal structures. Their enduring relevance speaks to humanity's inherent need to seek meaning beyond the tangible, making mythology a timeless and essential tool for philosophical inquiry and societal reflection.

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