***Creator and Creature: Creation Myths by Category*
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Though creation myths exist by the thousands, mythologists have identified a handful of patterns. Primarily, creation myths deal with the act of separation. In the beginning, most often, a state of wholeness or peace exists, a wholeness that is disrupted by some deliberate or unintentional violation by someone, usually a subordinate, but sometimes the god himself. In other myths, the world emerges from a state of chaos into a state of order, but even these myths imply separation, as chaos is divided into separate and increasingly smaller states.

In Jungian psychology, creation myths symbolize the dawning of self-awareness in the individual. They parallel that state in childhood when we become aware of ourselves and our separation from others; in other words, the sense we develop that we are separate from others, and then the growing awareness that we are divided within ourselves, parallel creation myths in their depiction of a world (similar to the [ego's] consciousness) that divides in two and then divides even further into smaller units.

**World Parents:** In this type of creation myth, a father/sky and mother/earth deity are involved in the world's creation, often their separation being the basis for creation. In many myths, the two parents go about the face of the earth creating and naming natural and animal life forms. This myth is found in Native American, Polynesian, and Asian cultures.

**Emergence Myths:** In emergence myths, the earth already exists, and life forms come from either a land above or below and into the finished earth. Men may exist in a cave below the earth's surface where they receive instruction in how to live on the surface. They then begin climbing toward the surface, sometimes scaling a rope or a vine, other times breaking through a hole in the ceiling and emerging into another cave or sealed area. In one Navajo myth, men climb through four worlds before emerging into the fifth and final one. These myths are also found in Central America and Asia.

**The Two Creators:** In this myth two creators produce the world out of a contest or challenge, one attempting to best the other. Often the two have a close but antithetical relationship, such as a brother/sister, father/son, or uncle/nephew. The intent is to establish a superior/subordinate relationship wherein one emerges as the victor over the other. The two creators may debate to establish who is wiser, or more fit to create a world. Sometimes a clearly good god wins out over an evil one. Such myths are found in Norse mythology, Native American, African, and Mediterranean.

**God as Craftsman:** Some myths depict god as a craftsman, a creator who uses his skills to make a world out of nothingness. This creator makes the earth and its inhabitants out of the elements of the earth, the most recurrent motif being that of man created out of clay, life then breathed into his nostrils. In Egypt it is believed that god was a potter who created the world from his potter's wheel. This myth type shows up in Europe, Africa and Asia.

**Earth-Diver as Creator:** The earth-diver is an archetypal figure who creates the earth out of substance brought up from the water. This is a particularly recurrent image in flood myths wherein a bird is sent out over the waters and returns with a twig, rock or bit of mud, which indicates the finding of earth. In Native American mythology, the earth-diver is just as often an animal as a man who dives below the water to bring up the materials necessary to begin construction of the earth. This type of myth is found all over the world from America through Europe and Asia.

**Creation Out of the Body:** The body of a god can provide the building blocks for the world. The most famous example of this type of myth is that of the god Ymir from Norse mythology. Ymir's skull is made into the sky, his bones become stones, his hair is made into vegetation, the blood becomes water, his brain forms the clouds, etc. The Australian Aborigines believe the bow and arrow were made from the bodies of male and female gods embracing each other. This is an exceedingly prevalent myth, found in all parts of the world.

**Germs and Eggs:** Many societies believe the world was created from a whole object like an egg, a self-contained item that is brooded upon by a god or force and then opened to reveal a fully created world. The egg is often associated with more advanced or mystical societies, particularly the medieval alchermists who saw the egg as a symbol of perfection. This myth shows up all around the early Mediterranean and Asian worlds.

**Abortive Creation Attempts:** A number of cultures feature gods who fail in their attempts to produce a race of man, first engendering giants, dwarves, monsters or other failed creations. Greek mythology abounds with such constructions. In Norse mythology, dwarves were formed from the maggots in Ymir's body. In Genesis, giants are formed when the sons of God mate with women on earth. A common motif in this type of myth is the story of the god who destroys his creation before starting over; this is the recurrent explanation in flood myths.