Viktor Rydberg's
Investigations into Germanic Mythology, Vol. II

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Towards a Method of Mythology

Is mythology a science? Does mythology have a method? The answer to the last question depends on the answer to the first, since knowledge without connection and a pursuit of knowledge without logic lacks all authority to adorn itself with the name of science.

If one were to investigate the logical prerequisites of a great many treatises that fall under the heading of mythology to find the answer, I fear the answer must be no.

Even if not in the way in which many of its practitioners proceed, mythology is essentially a science nevertheless, which like every other science has a scientific method best followed strictly to detect facts.

And these facts are important. Since the subject of mythological research is the human consciousness' innate concepts of the divine, of the world and natural events, of the holy and the unholy, of good and evil, and the period of these ideas' development and assimilation until the time when an effort was made to replace them with scientific concepts.

Myths thus form a forecourt that opens in different directions: in one toward religion, in another toward science. And by reason of its nature, this forecourt, moreover, is human poetry in its original form. In this way, when it follows science's reliable lead, mythological research can open glimpses for us into the spiritual life of ancient times and prehistoric humanity, like archeology, when it is methodical, opens glimpses for us into the stages of material life.

My intent with what I shall come to say below **[428]** cannot be to provide a complete, exhaustive method for mythology. Admittedly, I have collected and arranged material toward this and am in possession of an enormous collection of examples gathered from mythological treatises of false premises and incorrectly drawn conclusions, grotesque applications of deduction by analogy, psychologically absurd or historically incorrect hypotheses, as well as hypotheses built on top of hypotheses under circumstances that clearly certify that their authors did not have in mind heuristic principles, least of all a sense of the principle for scientific investigation known as Occam's Razor.[1] Thus, they had no inkling that the probability of the results' correctness decreases, so to speak, in ratio to the number of assumptions, even in the rare instances

[1] Attributed to the 14th century English logician and friar, William of Ockham, the principle states that one should make no more assumptions than needed. In other words, if given two equally predictive theories, choose the simpler one.

when one cannot make objections to their validity from a psychological or historical standpoint. In this work, I have had to satisfy myself, presenting only one of these examples with the detailed examination that I have devoted to it (see the treatise "*The Sibylline Texts and Völuspá*").[2] In Copernicus' time, there was no reason to dispute the possibility of the epicycles that one was forced to design to reconcile observations of the planets' movements within the Ptolemaic system. But each epicycle increased the number of assumptions, without which the system could not maintain itself. And if the Copernican theory was to win a decisive victory by degrees over the Ptolemaic theory, this essentially depended on astronomers' logical instincts or their logical awareness of the precedence of Occam's Razor over the accumulation of hypotheses. Occam's Razor holds precedence equally in the area of humanistic and natural sciences, even though in mythological investigations one is forced to witness an incessant oversight of it.

In a previous treatise, I have already pointed out the necessity of distinguishing between mythogony and mythology.[3] Naturally, everyone is free to use the word mythology in however wide a meaning he wishes and to stretch this meaning **[429]** even into mythogony, but what I mean by the term mythology here requires a specific term that definitely separates it from the field of mythogony in all cases. Mythology and mythogony specifically have different tasks and different methods of investigation. Mythology, as it stands now, must treat the Indo-European people's myth-complexes as a separate group, those of the Semitic people as another separate group, those of the Mongolian peoples' as a third, and so on, and then, after a thorough study of every such myth-complex, turn to the question of possible contact and a possible exchange of ideas among these different groups of myths. This for the same reason that the Indo-European languages must be treated separately, the Semitic languages separately, and so on before the question of pre-historic points of contact and word loans among them can be undertaken decisively. And the reason, which applies to myth-complexes as well as language groups, is the logical demand that, if these subjects are to be successfully compared with one another, and results drawn from the comparison, the characteristic qualities of these subjects must be clearly determined individually beforehand. Mythogony, however, requires no prior regulation, because its task is to seek to solve the psychological questions of the *origin* of myths, which is a common human question, and to find the universal human laws for their prehistoric development —laws equally valid for Mongols, Semites, and Indo-Europeans. Mythogony, in short, is a branch of *folklore* science, whose task is to discover laws regarding the activity of imagination.

Both of these sciences, mythogony and mythology, until this day, have suffered and been inhibited in their development, because they have been confounded with one another. The so-called weather-mythology or nature-mythology, which was dominant during the 19th century, is actually nothing more than mythogony, but a mythogony that

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[2] Not included here, but forming pp. 483-588 of the Swedish text, this treatise was originally published in *Nordisk Tidskrift*, 1881, as a response to theologian A.C. Bang's thesis that *Völuspá* was "a Norse Christian Sibylline Oracle." Ursula Dronke characterizes Rydberg's response as "over one hundred pages of marvelously intelligent, masterly criticism of the errors, imprecise thinking, and failure of scholarly imagination that underlay Bang's claim." "*Völuspá* and Sibylline traditions" in *Latin Culture and Medieval Germanic Europe*, ed. R. North and T. Hofstra.

[3] See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. II, Part 2, "An Overview of the Germanic Mythology's Epic Order" pp. 170-175. As Rydberg defines them, *Mythogony* is the science of the origin of myths, while *Mythology* is the study of myths in their current condition.

ill understood its task and used an inadequate method, as well as material which was partially insufficient and partially inappropriate for mythogonic research. **[430]** The material has been insufficient because it was limited to the mythic material found in cultured people's literature and art, while the myths of so-called "natural" people were left unexamined. It was also inadequate because the universal laws governing the creation and development of myths cannot be revealed except through an investigation outside of the area occupied by mythic and non-mythic *folklore*, which is why I cannot see any hope for mythogony's future on any other path other than the one that the so-called folklore-school has begun to clear. The material further has been inappropriate because the myth-complex of a cultured people, such as it exists, is the result of the development of many millenniums, during which numerous other factors than meteorological ones made themselves felt. These factors partially remodeled myths, sometimes unrecognizably, myths that may have had their earliest origin in an impression of natural phenomena on the imagination, and partially brought about important new mythic creations which, with reference to their origin, had nothing whatsoever to contribute. Such material is inappropriate, if it is not critically sifted for the purpose of mythogonic investigation; but the nature-mythologists have never undertaken such a critical sifting and could not have undertaken one, because it requires detailed investigations of the epic connection of myths such as they now exist, as well as general human psychological investigations that were first made possible via the avenue opened by the folklore-school. The method, if it deserves that name, used by the nature-mythologists is perhaps best characterized as a symbolic one, which leaves the field open to all possible conceits, from which no tenable consistency among their interpretations results.

By their very nature, the weather-mythologists never sufficiently noticed the great intervening significance that the gods— in which they see personifications of lightning, the storm, the sun, rain, etc and which originally possibly were those things — were personified, in the strongest sense of the word and, since prehistoric times, were regarded by their worshippers **[431]** and revered as *actual personal* powers, who have their personal fates and their individual characters. Moreover, when they do have meaning as myths of nature, they have it as *promoters* or *rulers* of certain natural phenomena, not as an express personification of it. For this reason, it never occurs to a weather-mythologist that when Agni is said to be a child from across the ocean, who brings humanity fire, religion, and culture, that one should understand that his worshippers believed that he actually was a child who came over the ocean and became humanity's culture bringer. Instead, they interpret this to mean that he was the lightning that came down to earth through the "sea of air." In other words: the practitioners of meteorological "mythology" have never seriously understood that myths, as they already existed in prehistoric times and as they exist in the oldest literature, are *godsagas*. They are epic products, stories of the gods' circumstances of kinship, their characteristic eccentricities, their sphere of activities, their battles to protect the world from demons, their intervention in the fates of the race of men whom they have created and protect, their relations with the patriarchs, etc. For this reason, it never occurred to them to observe the vast amount of evidence that exists in Indo-European myths for an epic connection among them and to investigate how far this connection extends. In epic reference, this produces beginning points and ending points. The beginning points are Chaos, the cosmo-theogony, and the creation of man. The ending points are the world's destruction and its renewal. Between them are placed

many events in the world of gods and men: the origin of culture, the battles between order and disorder and between good and evil, and between the holy powers and witchcraft. One should have then questioned himself or, more properly, questioned the myths whether these events were associated causally and formed a chain or not. But this question has never been posed by the nature-mythologists. It would break their circle, because the undeserved freedom with which they interpret each mythic concept as an expression of the activity of the sun, lightning, or the storm etc, is not possible except on the condition that myths are regarded each as independent and collectively as constituting a chaotic mass.

That a school such as this, whose premises are psychologically impossible and otherwise refuted by the myths own epic condition, could have been the dominant school for so long is a true wonder, but its explanation may be found in a circumstance that I shall point out below.

I now come to the actual mythology.

In his *Logic* and particularly in his *Methodlehre* (1883), the ingenious psychologist Wilhelm Wundt[4] has devoted some pages to mythological method. Although he himself does not use the term mythogony, in accordance with the still current usage which includes the field of mythogony under the heading mythology, he draws a dividing line between mythogony and mythology and applies to each the different tasks these sciences have, and to each the different methods they must follow. With reference to mythology, in the sense I understand this word, he points out that its first task is to *establish the original identity between mythic formations, which were separated by time and space.*

Before I proceed, I want to consider this principle more closely. It naturally follows that the aforementioned task of identification applies to mythic formations and mythic cycles that are demonstrably connected to one another through a common origin. The evidence for their common origin again lies in the affinity of languages. As a rule, the closer this affinity in languages is, the longer or the later the people that spoke this language lived together in prehistoric times, and the greater their common inheritance of modes of thinking, customs, and practices must have been. Thus, the affinity of language among the Goths, Scandinavians, Anglo-Saxons, Germans, etc. makes it necessary that, at some time and not so very long ago, **[433]** they possessed a common language (perhaps already divided into dialects), and a common mythic treasure (perhaps already enriched with local stories in places).

Were the myths of the Anglo-Saxons, the Germans, the Scandinavians, etc. now completely preserved, there would be no difficulty determining the common mythology of the Germanic tribes. One would then have Germanic mythology completely laid out before him, with its large complex of pan-Germanic myths and the local stories radiating from it. This, however, is not the case.

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[4] Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1921), German psychologist and founder of experimental psychology; Author of *Logik, eine Untersuchung der Principien der Erkenntniss und der Methoden wissenschaftlicher Forschung* Bd.1: *Erkenntnisslehre*. [*An Investigation of the Principles of Understanding and the Methods of Scientific Research*, Volume 1: *Understanding*], Volume. 2: *Methodenlehre*. [*Teachings on Method*].

Of these, only the Scandinavian[5] sources have preserved the proper material for mythological research, and these sources are of greatly varying value. With reference to their competence as witnesses, one can divide them into the following groups:

1) Stories from the heathen time by known authors (stories such as *Vellekla*, *Haustlöng*, *Þórsdrápa*, and fragments in *Skáldskaparmál*);[6]

2) Songs by unknown authors, but which tradition regards as originating from the heathen time, and which careful analysis shows do not contain any elements other than ones that are or may be of heathen origin (such as certain poems in the *Poetic Edda*);

3) Poetic expressions with mythological kernels in songs from the transition period to Christianity;[7]

4) Heroicized or historicized poems and narratives that collect their material from the myths and treat this material more or less faithfully, but more or less freely (such as the first nine books of Saxo's history, the poems concerning Helgi Hjörvardsson, and Helgi Hundingsbane, etc);

5) Narratives from later times that attempt to give accounts of the heathen forefathers' beliefs, which were themselves systemized, such as *Gylfaginning*[8] or in miscellaneous features.[9]

From a methodological standpoint, the first action required in regard to these sources is the purely linguistic task of putting at the researcher's disposal a complete collection of the existing texts, such as they have come down to our time, with a full indication of the variant versions and with the most thorough **[434]** elimination of all so-called text emendations. It need not be said that "text emendations" can sometimes correctly remove one mistake or another made by transcribers. The methodic researcher,

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[5] More correctly, the Icelandic sources.

[6] In his work "*Both One and Many*" (1994), John McKinnell takes a similar view. He writes: "When we look for genuinely heathen voices, there are three or perhaps four types of source: a) Mythological Eddic poems; b) Skaldic verse; c) Picture stones; d) Contemporary Christian views of Norse heathenism. It appears, therefore, that if we wish to study Norse myth through the eyes of those for whom it was a living faith (or at worst, through those of their close imitators), all these types of source must be combined, but the evidence of Eddic poetry is likely to be the most useful."

[7] While there is no question that skaldic poetry is replete with embedded mythological allusions, skaldic poetry (as opposed to Eddic poetry) was poorly understood in Rydberg's day, and his theory of elaborate "poetic kernels" as expressed throughout his *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, is overreaching and generally not valid. Only in rare instances does this method yield viable results.

[8] "The narrative of Snorri's *Edda* is based for the most part on old mythological poems, in particular *Völuspá* ('The Sibyl's Prophecy'). But there are discrepancies of one sort and another between the poems, and the other fragmentary sources about the pagan religion are either disjointed or terse and difficult to interpret. *Völuspá* is a collection of vivid poetic visions, and was probably rather enigmatic originally; in addition, it was in a poor state of preservation in Snorri's time. We have to be content with an imperfect and patchy understanding of the old religion. But this does not entitle us to assume that the religion itself was correspondingly primitive or incomplete. We must bear in mind that no extensive direct information about the pagan religion was recorded until fully two centuries after the conversion to Christianity, and the generations which had come and gone meanwhile were, or were supposed to be, hostile to these pagan heresies." "It seems an inescapable conclusion that stories told in prose must always have existed alongside stories told in verse. Many of the heroic lays are shaped in such a way that it is evident the poets assumed more knowledge of the subject-matter on the audience's part than the poems themselves encompass: a whole legend is there as a backdrop to the verse." *Icelandic Manuscripts: Sagas, History, and Art* by Dr. Jónas Kristjánsson, former director of the Árni Magnússon Institute, translated by Jeffrey Cosser; The Icelandic Literary Society, 1996.

[9] Such as the *Fornaldarsagas*.

nevertheless, is bound to encounter mistakes in transcription along his way, but he cannot and should not allow himself to set foot into the uncertain territory to which "text emendations" draw him, when they pertain to the substance of a thing. They always rest on the false premise that the redactor is completely familiar with the heathen complex of ideas, while his knowledge of it usually is defective, even if he is a historian of culture, a mythologist, and a linguist at the same time, which seldom is the case.[10] Text emendation usually afflicts some place in the text that seems unclear to the redactor, who then puts something "clearer" in its place. The premise is that the redactor knows everything that can occur within the conceptual contents of the text, and that which seems unclear to *him* thus cannot be correct. Text emendations that pertain to the factual contents therefore have the unavoidable tendency of ridding the text of just such places that are of prime importance to proper researchers, because in their "obscurity" they possibly refer to something previously unexplained that perhaps can open new avenues for investigation following heuristic principles for reliable guidance.

Even the finest linguists are guilty of this mistake. Here, I cite a couple of examples. Thus the expression "Heimir's woods" (*heimis skóga*) in *Hárbarðsljóð* 44 has been crossed out and replaced with "Heimir's mounds" (*heimis harga*), although the manuscript proves the authenticity of the first expression. It was done, partially to restore the supposed alliteration, and partially because the redactor found the first expression obscure, but his own guess clear.[11]

An analysis of the passage demonstrates that "Heimir's woods" gives the correct meaning.[12]

The same redactor has stricken the name Anund in *Völundarkviða* 2 and replaced it with Völund, as if in the field of mythology it was unknown that **[435]** the same personality could have been gifted with more than one name. Most often, he is equipped with many.[13]

A careful comparative investigation reveals that the manuscript is correct, and that Anund is an ancient name for Völund that was still used as such in the mythological sources that Saxo had at his disposal.[14]

I shall not augment these examples with examinations of what redactors of a lower order than the one referred to here have made in the same direction and with more energetic minds than his.[15] I have only wanted to point out the validity of my position that a researcher must set aside text emendations that pertain to factual contents.

The linguist has now done the mythologist the invaluable service of presenting him with faithful texts, including all available versions, for the purpose of their undergoing historical criticism, and enabling him to group the sources, and to assess critically the information's relative worth. However necessary this is, the predominant method still attempts to employ the tedious testimony of these sources. A person who

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[10] This is likely an allusion to Sophus Bugge, as the following examples make clear.

[11] In most modern editions, the phrase "Heimir's woods" remains.

[12] See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. II, Part 2, *Hárbarðsljóð*, pp. 119-121.

[13] This is still the case with all modern editions. The name *onondar*, which yields the masculine name *Önundar* (Anund) is replaced by the name Völund. Ursula Dronke comments: "the name *Völundar* is miswritten 'onondar' in the MS." (*Poetic Edda*, Vol. II, p. 306).

[14] Saxo's *Danish History*, Book 6; *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 108.

[15] The redactor Rydberg refers to here is undoubtedly Sophus Bugge. The examples Rydberg provides occur in Bugge's *Norroen Fornkvæði* pp. 102 & 164.

occupies himself with comparison and evaluation of source documents in the purely historical field and who is familiar with the criticism such as that utilized by Leopold von Ranke,[16] for example, would presumably be surprised to learn that in the field of mythological textual criticism one still can hold the view that *Gylfaginning*, written in the 1200s, is a reliable account of Norse heathendom's mythology, and that I, who endeavor to show this work's actual character, must hear an outcry concerning my disbelief from the linguistic school of nature-mythology. That would presumably occur if they learned that even less reliable Icelandic documents from Christian times — to some extent those that are nothing more than "superstitious" adventures pieced together with a free hand — are considered reliable evidence in mythological matters, and that out of such sources one still collects his information about what the heathens themselves thought, for example, of Odin's character. That would presumably occur if they have heard that Adam of Bremen, **[436]** notoriously unfamiliar with the Nordic doctrine about the gods and unreliable even in matters that lay closest to him in time and space, is preferred over the Nordic song *Skírnismál* in assessing how the Norse heathens imagined Frey. Adam had heard that in the temple at Uppsala was found an image that represented this god, equipped with a *priapus.* From this, one author draws the conclusion that *Skírnismál*'s description of Frey as a youth yearning for the beautiful Gerd must be incorrect, because how could a people who depicted him in such a manner have believed the same god was afflicted with such an ideal and highly civilized ailment as love-sickness! Animal psychologists know that horses and dogs can wither away from longing for a being that they miss. Among primitive people standing low on the stairs of human culture, the folklorist has discovered stories of how lovers yearn when they do not have one another; Indologists know that the most delightful descriptions of love were composed among the *lingam*-worshippers.[17] Cultural historians know that Selene-Diana's yearning for Endymion's lips[18] was unrestrained, that she was depicted in a Greek temple with numerous teats, that other Greek temples held the most peculiar images of gods that were in no way reminiscent of Greek anthropology, and that images of Priapus were found in Roman orchards as late as the fourth century after Christ, despite all the sophisticated love-poetry that Virgil, Ovid, Tibullus, and Propertius sang. But today, one can presume to judge in mythological matters without ever having observed this.

Once the historical mythological criticism of the source documents is performed on logical grounds (the principles this criticism must follow are described by Wundt, *Methodlehre* p. 534 ff.), one must proceed to analyze factually all the passages that demand it, to compile comparatively all the facts that the various sources tell of the same mythological events, and to extract the results with constant consideration of the decision that the historical criticism provided concerning the relative worth of the passages.

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[16] Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) German historian frequently considered the founder of the science of history. Ranke, committed to writing history as it was, introduced methodology and objectivism to historical writing, stressing such ideas as reliance on primary sources, narrative history, and international politics.

[17] *Lingam*, Sanskrit: mark, penis. In Tantra, translated as "wand of light"; a stylized phallus worshipped as a symbol of the god Shiva.

[18] In Greek mythology, the moon-goddess Selene looked down upon and fell in love with the shepherd Endymion as he slept among his flock. Smitten, she begged Zeus to allow him to live forever. Zeus granted her wish, and so he still sleeps in a cave on Mount Latmus, where he remains young and handsome forever. Selene embraces him each night, and in time bore him fifty daughters.

After this process has been completed, it is time **[437]** to pass on to the mythological material that the documents of the most closely related peoples (Germans, Anglo-Saxons, etc.) may contain in order to treat them in the same manner. That one must wait until this point is only due to this material's relative insignificance (which does not prevent it from having great significance in many respects for the final result of the investigation). With this, one should compare what the Classical and the post-Classical Latin literature has to say of the Germanic gods and mythic-heroes.

But here again lies a trap into which many mythologists have fallen. The danger lies in the temptation to apply the logically false conclusion *ex ignorantia* or "from non-existence" and to exploit this false conclusion on behalf of a very common tendency to discover "local myths." For example, one reasons in the following manner: "Heimdall is not a Germanic god, but a local Norse god, because the name Heimdall does not occur in the German mythic material." Only those who consider how insignificant this mythic material is quantitatively can fully appreciate the gigantic proportions of the logical error that such a deduction creates. Assume that one discovers a document that contains roughly twenty words and names belonging to a Germanic dialect that has otherwise vanished. What would a linguist say if one of his fellow linguists declared that a certain Germanic word never occurred in the dialect in question, because it was absent from the aforementioned document? Without doubt, he would regard it as a most unreasonable and false conclusion; the conclusion regarding Heimdall is equally unreasonable, yet nevertheless it has a multitude of parallels. The deduction is also false from the standpoint that it confuses one of the many names of the god with his person. A divine person with all his attributes and fate could have been common to many related peoples without the name by which one of them especially called him being used by the other. As their god of love, the Roman's meant the son of Venus, the same mythic being that the Greeks called *Eros*, **[438]** Aphrodite's son, but whom the Romans called *Amor* or *Cupido*. Among the Romans, Eros was a common slave-name.

In connection with this, a methodological observation may still be made in view of the effort to find "local myths" in the Germanic field, which in itself is credible and legitimate, but with reference to the current conditions is hopeless. In Germanic border lands that were subject to Roman power, stones have been found and perhaps more will be found in the future, which were raised according to Roman or Celtic custom. The genius or geniuses of the place were worshipped where the monument was established. Such spirits can thank a local culture for their origin, and they need not have been known for more than a few square miles around the stone. Some local story also may have been associated with the name of the local genius. But how probable is it that such a story was preserved for posterity and has been rediscovered in the existing mythic material? It is not probable at all, first and foremost because the chance a story has of being propagated for posterity, on one hand, is proportional to the number of people among whom the story is spread, and, on the other hand, proportional to the interest it holds for the human imagination. If a myth is known by two million people and a local story by 5,000, the chance of the local story's being transmitted through time to the myth's overall ability to be transmitted is 5,000 to 2,000,000 or 1 to 400. And what makes this worse is that local stories, to remain local, must be of little interest. If a local story has a more general interest and appeals more deeply to thought or imagination, it will gradually cease to be local. If it has even the smallest point of contact with the larger cultural complex of

myths, the local story will spread and become incorporated into the epic god- and hero-sagas. In origin, all myths are local. Presumably, all local stories that possess greater value for the imagination are incorporated into the common cultural myth-complex, if they have points of contact with it, **[439]** or else they spread in the form of common, non-mythic stories from people to people.

Not nearly as hopeless is the assumption that one could discover that larger populated areas, for example Sweden or Norway, Jutland or Saxony, worshipped gods or goddesses that were unknown to other Teutons and had myths about them that were not known outside of the tribe's territory or country's borders. The assumption itself is in no way unjustified, if it is not actually true; since to the same degree that a tribal god, unknown to other Germanic tribes, had believers, he also had a chance to become known within ever widening boundaries during the course of centuries, so long as he is comprehensible to all Teutons, and thus pan-Germanic, even if they are divided by dialect and linguistic relationships. Thus, instead of preventing it, this would have promoted a common knowledge of all the gods that were worshipped within the language-territory. For my part, during my investigations, I had nothing against finding a specialized Norwegian, or Danish, or Saxon god; but, although I sought to place myself in possession of all available Germanic mythic material and during many years of work have analyzed the same, I have not been able to discover the slightest reliable trace of such provincial gods. In fact, the longer my investigations proceed, the more reason I have to marvel that what is attested to by one of the Germanic peoples' traditions is attested, as far as the sources extend, in the smallest details of those of the others as well. Not that I am less likely to assume local myth-variations of diverse types, even though the existing mythic material has not substantiated that assumption, for the reasons that I have pointed out above.

One would not have been so quick to search for local myths, if one had observed the demands of methodology. The question, in its larger essential features, can actually be answered on the condition that one not throw logic overboard. Why, in many cases, with all likelihood, is the linguist now in the position of being able to decide if a word or a **[4404]** form of speech was pan-Germanic or only a local formation? So, therefore, one must not only treat the Germanic languages comparatively, but also go to other Indo-European languages and, in some of them, may make use of linguistic documents that are many centuries older than our own. If one or two Germanic languages preserve a certain word, and it is re-discovered in an Asiatic Indo-European language and in some of the other European Indo-European languages, one has reason to assume that it was found in the Proto-Germanic language, provided the laws of sound-shifts preclude the assumption that it is a loan word. That it does not exist in different Germanic languages means that the written documents either did not preserve their entire vocabulary or that the word died out by degrees in different Germanic languages.

Similarly, what pertains to words and forms of speech pertains to myths. By comparing Indo-Iranian mythology with the myths preserved within Germanic territory, one discovers a complex of myths that is common to both Indo-Iranians and Teutons, not only in its basic features, but in the personal temperaments and areas of activity of its gods and heroes, the details of their world's fate, and the association of their fates within a great world-epic. Moreover, Greek mythology, on many points, has testified to the same original unity, once one has found an area of myths within Germanic mythology

from which speculation and fancy about local myths have been banished once and for all. Outside of this area, speculation and fancy can still have their free play. However, it should be made clear that even the Germanic myths that do not have Proto-Indo-European support may have been pan-Germanic. Lack of this support does not demonstrate the opposite opinion, although the existence of support precludes it.

The last statement brings me back to Wundt's words cited above that the main task of mythology is to establish [**441]** the original identity of different mythic formations that were separated by time and space.

Wundt points out that the mythological researcher has two methods at his disposal: the Nominal method (which he calls the Linguistic method) and the Real method (which he calls the Philological method).

Where it is possible to prove a strong mythic identity, the Nominal method is used, as when the gods or heroes in the myths compared bear names that, notwithstanding their possible external differences, refer back to the same original name-form, when the laws of sound-shifts are observed. The identity of certain Indo-European figures attests to their originality, thus for example the names Vâta and Vôdana, Parganya and Fjörgynn; the original identity of certain Greek and Roman divine figures demonstrates the identity of the names Hestia and Vesta, of Dione and Juno.

However, some have exaggerated the usefulness and certainty of the Nominal method to a large degree. Some linguists seem not to have a sense for anything but the Nominal method and appear to feel uncomfortable using the Real method, which is much more meaningful and much more reliable. The Nominal method suffers first and foremost from its narrowly restricted applicableness. Identical gods and heroes in related peoples' mythologies can appear under completely different names. They can appear with different names even among the same people and, within this people, in contemporary mythological sources. They can appear with different names even in the same hymn or the same mythic poem. This occurs, quite simply, because all mythologies are cluttered with a more or less abundant synonymy. Gods, goddesses, and heroes can each bear numerous **[442]** names and epithets. Like words in general, they struggle with one another for existence, and are threatened to the same degree that a name or an epithet falls more and more out of usage. During the course of centuries, many synonyms vanish, while others arise, particularly under the influence of poets, who love new formations and strive for new names and epithets that emphasize and accentuate the quality of the subject celebrated, to which the poet particularly wants to call attention. If the epithet is well chosen, it quickly solidifies into a name in the usual meaning of the word, and this name is now in a position to supplant other names and epithets. Under such conditions, it is not surprising that the Indo-Iranian, Greek, and Germanic mythic cycles are so different from one another in reference to the names of gods and heroes; on the contrary, it is surprising that more than a few such names are preserved, among the Teutons, among the Greeks, and even among the Slavs, from far back into the Proto-Indo-European era. In cases where this occurs, the Nominal method can be applied, but not otherwise.

Yet even in this limited area, the Nominal method alone is far from certain. Actually, it can lead to unreasonable results. I need only refer to one example here.[19] The

[19] A second example is the identification of the Germanic god Tyr with the Indo-European Sky-Father based solely on the similarity between the name Tyr and the first half of the Proto-Indo-European term "Dyaus Pater." See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. II, Part 2, pp. 7-10.

Rigvedic people had a god, Varuna, the Greeks a god Uranos. If *varuna* and *uranos* are the same word, as linguists now as a rule claim, according to the Nominal method, the gods Varuna and Uranos should be identical. But they are not and they never have been. No concept of a mythological personality was fixed on this word when the forefathers of the Rigvedic people and the forefathers of the Greeks parted. After their separation, the word was first adapted to mythological use and fixed by the divided peoples on distinct divine personalities that do not have the slightest personal similarity to one another, but stand in the starkest contrast to one another. The one-sided adherents of the "Linguistic" method believe that *nomina* is *numina.*[20] For a sound investigation, this is a serious mistake.

Another mistake that plays a great and lamentable role in the field of mythological investigation, or rather of thought, is the limitless importance that linguists place on a mythic name once they have determined, or believe they have determined, its meaning. One assures himself that if a name means, for example, "the shining" or "the thundering," then it can immediately be taken for granted that, **[443]** with the name, one has all of its owner's qualities defined *in nuce*,[21] and that all myths in which he plays a role must be explained by his quality of being "the shining" or "the thundering." In the field of mythology, it can be satisfying to establish the primary significance of a name's meaning and regard it as expressing a primary quality of, or the principle and original quality of its possessor, assuming only that one is certain the name in question is the oldest he possessed. Unfortunately, that is seldom evident. But in the actual field of mythology, this position is absolutely untenable. Myths about "the shining" and about "the thundering" mythic person have formed without the slightest reference to their "shining" or "thundering" nature. The "shining" or "thundering" personality can simultaneously have had many other names and epithets that expressed his other characteristics. That the name Agni means fire has mythological importance, but that does not hinder the god from having been represented as an actual child or an actual youth who fought actual battles with demons, actually guarded the world of gods, actually taught human beings the laws of religion and morality, and actually been sent as a messenger from the gods to the Ribhus in order to communicate an important offer to them. This misuse of the Linguistic method has particularly been handy for the nature-mythologists. The support it obtained from linguistics thus explains how the school of nature-mythology was able to prop itself up as long as it has.[22]

The second method, which is to establish the original identity of myths separated by time and space, is, as I mentioned, the Real method, which compares the contents of the myths. As I previously pointed out, this method is more reliable and much more useful than the Nominal method. Naturally, it is best when the identification of a myth's contents complements **[444]** the identification of its names. But, for reasons already cited, these cases must have been comparatively rare. When they do occur, the evidence becomes more apparent. When they do not, the evidence still can be equally good. The strength of the evidence grows in proportion to the number of identical, characteristic,

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[20] i.e. that the name is the god.

[21] "in a nutshell."

[22] [Rydberg's footnote]: The criticism I have given here does not prevent me from recognizing the significance of a couple of mythologists, primarily Adalbert Kuhn, as pioneers for a scientific mythogony.

and unusual details that exist on opposite sides of the equal sign drawn up in the equation:

P (a + b + c + d, etc) = S (a + b + c + d, etc).[23]

If, for example, it is said of both Agni and Heimdall— of one as well as the other— that he is born to many mothers, that he has golden teeth, that he is heaven's actual guardian, that as a child he was sent across the ocean to bring human beings religion and culture, that he is the father of the castes, that he fought in the sea with a demon over a radiant piece of jewelry and won it, etc., etc.; then it is clear that such characteristic qualities found in both mythologies, when they are associated with a single personality and not divided among several, give their identity a probability for whose degree a calculation, consistent with the calculation of probability, can be made. The probability increases geometrically, so to speak, for every new such quality that can be associated with the subject. The certainty of the results would be foregone, even if they had not been corroborated by the resemblance of the names of the patriarchs to which Agni-Heimdall were sent: on one side we find Bhrigu and Manu, on the other side Berich and Mannus.

The Real method of research is danger-free, if it is used with ordinary common sense. It is apparent that similarity proves nothing, if it is of a general nature and lacks remarkable characteristics. If one wants to demonstrate that Cajus is Polybius, and therefore observes that Cajus has eyes and Polybius also has eyes, Cajus has a nose and Polybius also has a nose, etc., the listener needs neither learning nor wit to realize the nature of such evidence. Not so apparent is the incorrect use of the Real method of research, which can be illustrated by the following equation:

S (a + b + c + d) = P (a + b) + P' (c + d),

[445]

An instance of this occurs when a certain mythic person S, for example Baldur, is deemed originally identical to a P, for example a hero in the Illiad, but instead of the likeness between S (Baldur) and P (the hero) being demonstrated, it is assumed that P (the hero) is conflated in some (psychologically unlikely) way with Christ (P'), and thus complements the similarity between S and P with possible similarities between S and P'. This is an error that militates against one of the heuristic principles necessary for scientific investigation, as I will point out in more detail below.

After what I have pointed out, it should not surprise anyone if it appears naive to me when a German critic regrets that I engage in identification. The critic does not state that I identify in a hasty or superficial manner. He objects in principle to all such identification, although, as Wundt points out, mythology's main task in its present stage is just that. Without the utilization of the Real method of identification, mythology will never become a science.

The work of identification is that much more necessary, since the synonyms are so extraordinarily rich, not least in Germanic mythology. But synonyms are by no means

[23] In this equation, P and S represent the subjects of comparison, and the letters, a, b, c, d, etc, represent their shared traits.

characteristic of it. Even *Rigveda*'s gods and heroes are polynomous and the work of identification, carefully and methodically undertaken, is necessary within its scope as well. Here are a few examples from the abundance of Vedic names and epithets, with the added observation that some of these epithets were used exclusively as names. (A definite boundary between names and epithets can never be drawn, because a name is nothing more than an ancient epithet with a stronger grounding and wider usage). Indra is called Maghavan, Sûri, Vrishan, Nrinarya, Çakra, Vritrahan, Dasyuhan, and Yajnavriddha. Vâta is also called Vâju and Vivasvat. The Asvins are also the Nâsatyas. Agni is called Vaiçvânara, Viçvacarshani, Viçvakrishti, Tanûnapât, and Naraçamsa.

Greek mythology also is rich in synonyms; The Roman overflows with them.

[446]

Many may realize that synonymy was a burden on the minds of the professors of their respective religions, which confused their mythological concepts. One ought to assume that such a wealth of names and epithets could not be grasped in due order and passed on from generation to generation, if a priest class did not exist with duties in this regard. The assumption may thus follow that the great number of divine names and divine epithets were known and used only within a narrow circle of priests and skalds.

It requires care, however, in adopting views that seem as reasonable as these. Within certain boundaries, synonymy is a light load that one can bear without a thought to its existence. Is the Christian religion and its documents burdened with synonymy? I posed this question once, and the first instantaneous answer was "no"; the second response, which came after a little consideration, was "yes." God, the Creator, the Eternal, the All-mighty, the All-seeing, the Lord, the King of Heaven, Lord Zebaoth, the Father are all names that designate one divine being. The same being is called Providence and Heaven (in expressions such as "It was Heaven's decision," "It was Heaven's decree"); the last designation is as equally heathen as it is pious. One who is knowledgeable about the Bible knows that the first person in the trinity, moreover, is called Jehovah, Adonai, and Elohim. The second person in the trinity is called Jesus, Messiah, Christ, God's lamb, the Son, God's son, the son of David, the son of Mary, the son of man, the Master, the Nazarene, the Savior, the Redeemer, the Deliverer, the Crucified, etc. Mary is the Mother of God, the Holy Virgin, and during the whole of the Middle Ages she was known as the "Star of the Sea."[24] The sons of Zebedee are called Boanerges[25]; Peter is actually named Simon, and Paul is actually named Saul. The evangelist Matthew has been identified with the tax collector Levi. Bartholomew is actually named Nathanial. Lebbaeus is considered identical with Judas Jacob's son and also designated as Thaddeus.[26] Simon the Canaanite bears the name Zelotes. **[447]** The evangelist Mark is actually named John (*Acts of the Apostles* 12:12).[27] Barnabas, before he receives this epithet, is named Joseph or Joses. Along with the verbal synonymy comes a visual synonymy of which knowledge was less widespread, but which was absolutely no burden on the mind for those who possessed it. Many know that a triangle or an eye surrounded by rays is a symbol of the All-seeing, that a lamb with a banner is a

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[24] *stella maris*.

[25] Mark 3:17 "James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, whom he surnamed Boanerges, that is sons of thunder."[Standard Revised Edition].

[26] Matthew 10:3 "Lebbaeus or *Lebbaeus* called Thaddaeus" [Standard Revised Editon, footnote].

[27] "John whose other name was Mark" [Standard Revised Edition].

symbol of Christ and that a dove is a symbol of the Holy Ghost. Nor is it a priestly secret, if not exactly common knowledge, that an angel, a lion, an ox, and an eagle are symbols of the evangelists. During the centuries that lacked an established system of schools and scarcely had schools at all, even the most ignorant among Christ's followers had a surprising knowledge of this kind of synonymy. A gridiron was the metaphorical symbol of Laurentius, a key of Peter; a sword of Paul; goose-feet designated a feminine statue as Queen Seba, and arrows in a breast indicated Sebastian.

In short, Christianity has lived, and still lives, within the depths of a synonymy that is so innocuous that one does not even reflect on its existence.

The same psychological laws applied to the formation of the heathen synonymy as to the formation of the Christian one. A single name cannot possibly illustrate everything that the myths tell of the name's bearer and, commonly, the meaning of the oldest name that a god bore is unknown to his own worshippers and thus is an abstraction that ceases to designate him by any of his qualities. I doubt that during the last centuries of Norse heathendom many knew that the name Odin, Vodan, meant wind, although everyone knew that Odin was the lord of the heavens and the wind. But the qualities one attributed to him and the adventures that were told of him gave not only skalds and singers, but assumedly many people, reason to give him new designations which recognizably **[448]** designated these qualities or recognizably referred to these mythic adventures. And for that reason, they did not burden the memory, but on the contrary, they could have acted as mnemonic aids based on the association of ideas, if such help had been necessary, which it was not. Under the development and transformation of language, it must naturally follow that many such names and epithets become antiquated in their meaning, that their meanings become obscure; but these antiquated names and epithets can never grow into such a mass that they are preserved for remembrance, and this simply for the reason that every such name or epithet, when it does not become fixed or attain common usage, is relegated to oblivion by degrees. Time, which creates new names and epithets, also thins out many of the old ones, and thus names preserved from the Proto-Indo-European era are few. Moreover, memory can retain a large number without trouble. Mnemonic verses in which they became collected were composed, not for necessity, but for pleasure, and it is not difficult for children to learn names by the hundreds when they are gathered in rhyme and meter. Fragments of such synonymic name-lists are found in the *Poetic Edda*.[28] Entire poems intended as nothing more than reinforcement to impart names and synonyms in a comic manner are found there too, connected to some adventure.[29] To learn them may have been a pastime for children around the hearth, as it is in our day for them to learn nonsense set in rhyme and meter.[30] However, in regard to a great number of the synonyms, such learning was as unnecessary as it would be in our day to learn mnemonic verses that impart the synonyms of God the Father or Jesus. For example, one who knew that Egil was the finest of all archers need

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[28] Such as *Grímnismál* 46-54.

[29] Such as *Alvíssmál*.

[30] [Rydberg's footnote]: For example: *Ullen dullen doff fingeli fingeli foff offer alle manne panne e be boff Adam Eva ut. Pala sala sinka mi so sebedei sebedo extra lara kajsa sara eck veck vällingesäck*, etc. [This is one of several variations of a counting rhyme used to randomly select members of a team, comparable to the English rhyme beginning "Eenie, Meanie, Miny, Mo." All the words are nonsense, except for the word *ut* (out). The person being pointed at when *ut* is spoken is the one selected. Today the most common form is "*Ole dole doff*/ *kinke lane koff*/ *koffe lane binke bane*/ *ole dole doff*!"]

not be taught that Örvandil, i.e. "the one occupied with arrows,"[31] was an epithet **[449]** for him when he is spoken of under this name in a narrative retelling one of Egil's adventures. One who knew that Ivaldi-Svigdir was an elf-king in Svithiod and Finland, famous as a watchman by a fjord over the Elivogar, as a great drinker and spear-champion need not be taught that the epithets Finn-king, Svigdir (great-drinker), Vadill and Geirvandill (spear-champion) refer to him when they appear in poems that describe his adventures.

The wealth of synonyms was thus neither a troublesome burden nor a cause for confusion, since an epithet, once it had become fixed on a certain god, was used as a rule, so long as this epithet was known and associated with him only. The hymns of the *Rigveda*, as well as the Germanic and the Greek documents attest to this. The exceptions to this are few and have their explanation in an epithet's more general or patronymic significance.

But an entirely different circumstance ensues with synonyms when a religion has died out, and its myths have been preserved only in fragmentary pieces for posterity. Then, which names were synonyms cannot be established without the most careful investigation of the fragments. Egil can appear in one fragment by that name; in another, he may appear under his byname Örvandil, in a third under his byname Ebur. And, as long as the fragments are not subjected to the strictest application of the Real method described above, it is easy to assume that Egil, Örvandil, and Ebur are three different persons. One might never have escaped this difficulty that the synonymy produces under such conditions, had not both *Eddas* fortunately given abundant and emphatic evidence of the synonymy's existence in the field of Germanic mythology and also furnished many mythic names of a synonymous nature. Had this not happened, one might be convinced that the nature-mythologists, who prefer to see the myths as isolated tales, because they then are easier to treat as purely meteorological symbols, could easily deny the existence of synonymy, and that linguists, for whom **[450]** every *nomen* (name) is a specific *numen* (divinity), would give the nature-mythologists their hearty support on this point. As it is now, they must limit themselves to the assertion that the *Eddas* have gathered and preserved all of the synonyms that actually existed. But for everyone who has critically reviewed the contents of the *Eddas*, this assertion is too absurd for discussion.

The Real method of mythological research consists of comparing the epic contents of the myths and establishing connections among the myths compared via the connections among episodes in the contents of the subjects compared, and further establishing the identities of the people appearing in them through the identification of their characteristic features, familial relationships, surroundings, friends, foes, and adventures.

It should be evident that *if* connections among the myths which now exist in a fragmentary state existed in heathen times — that *if* some, many, or all the myths form smaller or larger epics or a great common epic — this cannot possibly be demonstrated in any other way, not least because of the synonymy, than through the use of the Real method, which is the first and foremost method of all mythological research.

This *if* does not mean that one starts from the hypothesis *that* epic connections existed among myths. The outcome of the research must first provide the answer to this

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[31] "*den med pilar sysslande*." Rydberg also renders the same name as "*Pilskötaren*," the "Arrow-handler."

question. This *if* only means that one starts from the disjunctive premise: epic connections either exist among some, many or all myths, or they do not exist.

Both possibilities should be kept in mind. *But in the application of methodical rules, only one of these possibilities can be used as a principle*. To assume in advance that no connections exist among the phenomena of which one is attempting to determine possible connections is absolutely unfair in mythological investigations as well as in every other field of investigation. **[451]** When natural science was still in its infancy, it was a commonly held belief that the phenomena of nature did not offer more extensive analyzable causal connections, because both divine and demonic powers intervened in them daily. A researcher without assumptions could then have presented the disjunctive premise: either an analyzable causal connection exists in nature, or it does not; but he would not have been able to make a single step in a scientific direction, if he assumed the disjunctive proposition's latter *membrum*[32] (that a connection capable of analysis did not exist) as the premise of his investigation, for the simple reason that one would have to be mad to utilize methodology on that which he assumes defies methodological investigation and seeks to analyze what he assumes to be unanalyzable. Thus, it is the disjunctive proposition's first *membrum* — the possibility that a connection exists — that *must* serve as the principle of the investigation. This may lead to the conclusion that a connection is impossible to discover, and then one would have to establish this; or it can lead to the conclusion that a connection exists and one would have to demonstrate what it is and how far it extends.

It has been urgent for me to point out and necessary for me to waste words on what seems self-evident to me, because a linguist, who otherwise wished to assess my work kindly, expressed pity that as a premise of my investigation I sought to look for order and connection among the myths. This pity is itself pitiable evidence of how destitute of knowledge about the primary demands of scientific investigation one can be without considering himself incompetent to preside as judge in such matters as these.

In connection with this, a second objection that has been leveled against me should be addressed as well, because it too touches on mythological methodology, which its author seems to know nothing about.

Specifically, a critic has said that many of **[452]** the conclusions to which I have come stand or fall on the assumption that Groa in *Gróugaldur* is the same as Örvandil's wife, Groa, in the *Prose Edda*, and that Svipdag in *Gróugaldur* and *Fjölsvinnsmál* is the same as Svipdag in Saxo's story of King Gram. This critic imagines that one can easily assume that two or three people named Groa and that two people named Svipdag existed in the mythology. He has disregarded the fact that I presented evidence for these persons' identifications,[33] while no evidence was presented or can be presented for the opposite view. But it is not that upon which I must primarily comment, but upon the methodological implications of the critic's objection. I shall demonstrate that this primarily involves a value-assessment, principally incorrect from the standpoint of scientific methodology, of both formally possible suppositions, and second, it involves unfamiliarity with or disregard for the relationship between synonymy and homonymy in Germanic mythology.

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[32] "part," "division."

[33] *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. 1, no. 24.

A principle called the principle of simplicity or of the least cause is among the heuristic principles that no scientific research can be without, no matter what type it is. This principle also pertains to the application of logic to practical problems that life presents, for example criminal legal investigations.

In short, it reads: Every investigation should proceed from the simplest assumption possible. It is the same principle that long ago received its expression in the formula: *causæ non sunt præter necessitatem multiplicandæ*[34] — the same principle that led Copernicus to his heliocentric theory and that, always applied by the greats of natural science, has cleared an ever more extensive tract toward the exact sciences. The principle does not involve some presumptive assumption that reality's phenomena and their causal chains are of the simplest possible nature, and that *for this reason* the simplest possible explanation among them should be the best. It rests on the demands of methodology: 1) that every investigation shall methodically proceed from an inspection of the simplest conditions **[453]** to an inspection of the more complicated ones; 2) that each and every circumstance shall be explained by a cause that is sufficient (neither more so nor less so) to explain it; 3) that when all factors of a complicated phenomenon have been investigated, one has to see if the product of these factors can also be explained by the causes that explain the factors, in which case, one does not need to seek any other means of explanation.

In this investigative process, natural science has the invaluable assistance of experiment. The historical and philosophical sciences lack this aid. So does mythology. But mythology has a guide that it has not employed previously, but whose worth is of great value. It is the same aid that the criminal legal process employs, namely the principle called the *convergence principle*, which stands in the closest connection to the *principle of simplicity* or *of least cause*. The scientific-mythological and the criminal legal procedures are the most closely related to one another of all, despite the different material they handle.

In order to clarify what I mean by the *convergence principle*, as a start, I will give an example rather than a definition. As an example, I have chosen a criminal case history:

Many miles away from city A, in a solitary house in the proximity of C, the corpse of an investor[35] living in A was found. The man had had his neck slashed. Close to his right hand lay a razor. The person who discovered the body was sensible enough to realize that nothing had been moved from its position before the experts had been summoned. The wound inflicted on the neck was established as the cause of death. The nature of the wound and the direction in which the cut had been made were established. An insignificant amount of money was found in the man's wallet. The first question was: Is this a suicide or a murder?

To answer this question, what one would call a psychological examination was conducted. From this, it was clear **[454]** that the investor was a sociable and cheerful human being in good health and, as far as it could be determined, worry-free. None of those who knew him believed that he had entertained thoughts of suicide. One who had seen him the day he had left A by train had found him in good humor.

The psychological investigation thus pointed towards murder. But one can still not speak of a *convergence*. From a single straight line, the position of center cannot be

[34] "Causes are not to be multiplied beyond what is necessary."
[35] The actual word is *rentier*, meaning "a person of independent means."

established, and many well-adjusted people who seemed to be in the best spirits have killed themselves shortly thereafter.

The investigation further determined that the investor was left-handed, even though the razor was found lying near his right hand. This, together with many of the doctors' statements, pointed in the same direction as the psychological examination: the death was caused by someone else. Two lines could now be drawn from different points of origin and, if the problem had belonged to plane geometry, one could immediately see at which point they converged. But a problem such as this criminal case does not allow itself to be solved so easily. It is a "multi-dimensional problem."

Because the razor-knife was the murder weapon, certain questions arose: Did the investor shave himself? Yes, most often. Could the razor be his? The answer is uncertain because the razor was like many others. How many razors did he own? There is no sure answer but his staff had seen two, and these were found left in his dwelling.

The corpse was well-shaven. The investor had not been seen since he left the railway station that day on the morning he traveled from A. Assumedly, his last shave had occurred in A. On the ground floor of the house the investor owned, a barber had his shop, which the investor sometimes patronized. The barber immediately let it be known that he had shaved his landlord the morning of the day he had left. The barber remembered him so clearly because on that occasion he himself **[455]** was preparing to travel and, shortly thereafter, proceeded by train to city B. From A, B lies in the opposite direction of C, where the body was found.

The circumstance that a barber lived in the investor's house and traveled away the same morning, and that the investor was found to have been murdered with a razor-knife, constitute a coincidence whose results deserve to determine its direction. One investigated whether the barber actually traveled to B that morning. Two people had seen him there that day in the afternoon. By utilizing one of the quickest means of transportation, he certainly *could* have come from B to C the same day. But nothing proved he did.

On the other hand, it appeared that the barber had an unusual amount of money during the days after the murder of the investor. Here we find a line that converges toward the same point as these: that the investor was killed with a razor, that the barber living in his house, who conversed with him before he traveled, was absent from A the same day, and that the investor was murdered and probably robbed, because the insignificant sum that was discovered in his wallet was evidence of a robbery.

There was now reason to inspect the barber's razors. The first result was that the razor-knife found beside the body was of the same make and model as many of the razors in the barber's possession.

Thus, here is a line that converges toward the same point as some of the foregoing lines. As the investigation continued, a manufacturer and a merchant let it be known that a dozen razor-knives of this type with the same model number as the knife used in the murder had been sold to the barber. Here again a sharply drawn line is directed toward him. The barber was requested to present the dozen knives he had purchased. He could only produce eleven. One was missing. Again a sharp line is drawn toward him. **[456]**

I shall not continue this story further. Still, many converging lines exist. The barber was found guilty. Why? Not on the basis of the strength of one isolated piece of evidence among those that counted against him — since every such isolated piece could

and did receive a reasonable explanation by his lawyer — but on the basis of the convergence of evidence. From different points, so many lines were directed toward a single point that the judge and jury had to fix decisive significance on the probability that was established by this means. Nevertheless, it is possible that the barber was innocent. But it is extremely unlikely. Under such circumstances, when human justice must reach a conclusion which does not condemn an innocent man, science must also do so. Science must judge by probability, where mathematical certainty is impossible. All induction, even natural scientific induction, merely leads to probability. But this can be of such a degree that it practically can be equal to certainty.

In what connection does the convergence principle applied here stand to the principle of simplicity or of least cause referred to above? One finds the answer when he considers that all the circumstances uncovered in the investigation can be explained if the barber is guilty, while the arguments for the barber's innocence must be assumed to be many and internally disjointed. The barber could have lost the twelfth razor and the murderer acquired it; the barber could have received a large sum of money in an honest manner around the time the investor was killed, etc., etc.

I pass now to an application of the same principle in the question of Groa's identity. Groa is mentioned in three places: in the poem *Gróugaldur*, in the *Prose Edda*, and in Saxo.[36] Below, we present a judge and two lawyers. Of the latter, one will argue that the Groa who is mentioned in all three of these places is identical. The other will argue the opposite position. **[457]** I first will illuminate the methodological worth of the two opinions, in order to touch on the argument afterwards.

The first lawyer: Your Honor, two possibilities exist: one, that there is a single Groa, or two, that there is more than one Groa. Only through a methodological process can the matter be decided. But no procedure that breaks heuristic principles at the start is methodological. For this reason, allow me first to contemplate this matter from a formal perspective. If nothing in the contents of the matter stands in the way, the principle of simplicity or of least cause should be brought to bear on the investigation of the problem first. I assume that Groa is the same in all three places. Thus I use the principle of simplicity as my guide and follow the common scientific law: *causæ non sunt præter necessitatem multiplicandæ*: "more causes than what are necessary may not be assumed." Thus, I consider my position enormously better situated than that of my honorable colleague.

The 2nd lawyer: Your Honor, I focus your attention on my honorable colleague's admission that his argument is purely formal. The mythology, your Honor, is a science itself within whose realm such methodological formalities never ascribe any absolute validity. Your Honor understands very well that there may have existed one Groa, two Groas, or a hundred Groas in the realm of mythology, without the formal and empty logical classification called the principle of unity being in any position to place the slightest obstacle in its path. There is no stronger reason to assume that the mythology had only one Groa, than there is to assume that the real world has only one Petronella[37]

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[36] In *Skáldskaparmál* 25, at the end of the story of Thor and the giant Hrungnir, and in Saxo's *Danish History*, Book 1.

[37] A girl's name of Greek origin; the feminine version of Peter. It is not common in Sweden today, and was not in Rydberg's day either.

and I support the assertion that if Groa were not a common name within mythological circles, then Petronella was not a common name among mortal ladies.

The Judge (who never argues with attorneys): Gentlemen, the question can be settled at once, if there is reason to assume more than one Groa in the three sources **[458]** referred to here: *Gróugaldur*, the *Prose Edda*, and Saxo.

The 2nd lawyer: Unfortunately, this is the easy way out, to assume that the matter is not open. But absence of proof for a theory only proves that the opposite view is correct. We all remember that, since we first read logic into the world.

The 1st lawyer: I concede this willingly and I am delighted that my colleague has logic in mind.

The 2nd lawyer: The absence of direct evidence for my subject indicates this even less, of course, the more one contemplates the fragmentary state of our sources.

The 1st lawyer: I also concede that.

The 2nd lawyer: Besides, the burden of proof is on my honorable colleague. No other mythologist imagined that Groa must be a single entity, before he troubled us with this assertion. He who makes a claim should prove it; I am not obligated to disprove it. My duty is only to review the evidence he presents, and if I strike it down, the matter remains as before.

The 1st lawyer: I concede that the burden of proof lies with me.

The Judge: Then proceed!

The 1st lawyer: Your Honor, Norse mythology has a particularly rich synonymy…

The 2nd lawyer: The question here is not one of synonymy but of homonymy — not a question if a mythological person bore many names, but whether two or more persons bore the same name. I hold the latter, you deny it.

The 1st lawyer (continues): …but a particularly insignificant homonymy. Your Honor, here is a list of the individual designations and their synonyms. They appear *en masse*; they number in the hundreds, and fill many columns. And here is a list of homonyms. They amount to a dozen. Two may be shown to be false conjectures of *Gylfaginning*'s author; four others may be shown not **[459]** to be actual homonyms, but names that Odin called himself on the occasions he played the role of the name's actual owner. Of two others, the sources do not agree on their documentation or one's existence. The actual homonymy is thus insignificant. But, nevertheless, let us assume that the indisputable homonyms number a dozen, so that new points of debate do not unnecessarily lengthen the process. In the disputable cases, the probability of the occurrence of a homonym stands in relationship to the ratio of the number of pure individual names and their synonyms on one side and the number of indisputable homonyms on the other. When one number is divided by the other, you can see, your Honor, how it correlates to this probability statistically. It constitutes a very small percent and its very smallness confirms (if confirmation is required) the direct proof I shall present that one has an equally small right to speak of more than one mythological Groa, as he does to speak of more than one Hlodyn, or one Freyja, one Fulla, one Nanna, one Gerd, one Gefjon, one Idun, one Skadi, one Urd, one Verdandi, one Skuld, one mother Night, one Bödvild, one Eir, one Hild, or one Göndul, one Skögul, one Gunnlöd, one Gna, one Angeyja, one Bestla, one Beyla, one Fenja, etc., as he does to speak of more than one Odin, or one Thor, one Tyr, one Bragi, one Vidar, one Vali, or one Baldur, etc. Homonymy, your Honor, has its natural limits in that a more extensive homonymy would

make all mythology completely unintelligible for the believers of the myths, while synonymy in no way endangers comprehension of the material, quite the contrary.

The 2nd lawyer: I have abstained from objecting to the attempt my worthy colleague has made to introduce statistical probability and percentages, when they are best left at home. In many cases, they have done harm. In the name of independent mythological research and its traditions and its modern state, I reject this ridiculous attempt to estimate numerically the internal structures of myths, which are products of pure imagination — I object to the **[460]** preposterous attempt to apply to mythology any other scientific method than is congenial with the myths' own origins in our forefathers' still youthful and tender minds, still not prone to abstraction and figures. Besides, I can put stock in the small percent of probability that my careful colleague has willingly assigned to the assumption that more than one mythological Groa existed. The probability of winning the lottery is said to be small, but in every drawing, someone nevertheless wins every time. I presume that my case has prevailed on the odds my colleague's comic ponderings have afforded it. Now, prove the opposite!

The Judge: Does either of you gentlemen have anything more to add?

The first lawyer then presents the direct reasons for the identifications of Groa and of Svipdag in the mythic sources where their names appear — the same reasons, that are presented in my work.[38] On that occasion, he uses the principle of convergence, as has the judge in the above adduced criminal case.

He presents first what *Gróugaldur* and the *Prose Edda* have to say about Groa's personal qualities and activity. It is not much, but, nevertheless, should exhaust the evidence for or against. Her activity in the adventure narrated in the *Prose Edda* portrays her as an *absolutely superb galder-singer*. Many goddesses are powerful galder-singers, but it is Groa who Thor summons to remove the splinter of flint that has been lodged in his skull during his battle with Hrungnir. *Gróugaldur* also describes her as an *absolutely superb galder-singer*, whose galder protects her son during the unprecedented adventures he endures, for which he receives the beautiful Menglad's hand. The character of the *Prose Edda*'s Groa is that of a good and sensitive woman. When Thor informs her that he has rescued her husband Örvandil from a perilous adventure, in her joy she forgets to continue the galder-song and the flint chip remains in Thor's head. The Groa of *Gróugaldur* ponders over her young son Svipdag's unfolding fate, and when she is dead and her son is in a position **[461]** that seems dangerous to him, she sings protective galder and consoling words from her grave mound to him. Beautifully and simply, the skald has expressed her warm, motherly love in the opening words she says to her son and in her parting words to him.[39] This is everything that the sources tell us concerning Groa's personal qualities; it is not much, but it converges toward Groa's identity in both sources. That notwithstanding, he who assumes that this is a matter of two dises with the name Groa must also accept the fact that the myths described these two as having the same character and the same ability.

2nd lawyer: I am satisfied with that. The myths consist of many independent creations of imagination, in which chance occasionally may have created an analogous character. One poet created a warm-hearted galder-singer and called her Groa. Another poet by chance has done exactly the same. Will my colleague deny that this is possible?

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[38] *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, nos. 24, 33, and 96.
[39] *Gróugaldur* 2, 15, and 16

1st lawyer: Your Honor, I come now to other points of evidence. Let us see if they converge. Saxo also speaks of Groa. Although her hand belongs to another, Gram (Halfdan) carries her away. Thereafter, a hero appears in Saxo's narrative with the name Svipdag, who — Saxo does not tell us why — hates Gram-Halfdan unto death, fights him, and finally becomes his bane. To begin with, I will point out that the Groa of *Gróugaldur* has a son named Svipdag, and that the name Svipdag thus appears in association with the name Groa in two of the three sources that say something of Groa. Thus, the evidence converges toward the same point. Further, your Honor, Saxo says that Svipdag spared and gave a kingship to Gudhorm, the son Gram (Halfdan) had with Groa, but hated and made war on the son that Gram had with another woman.[40] Saxo does not tell us the reason for these different behaviors, but when *Gróugaldur* informs us that Svipdag was Groa's son, we understand the psychological causal connection of the matter; if Groa is **[462]** the same in both sources, then Svipdag is Gudhorm's half-brother and has an obligation to be lenient toward and to protect his sibling. Among Teutons, the bonds of brotherhood were sacred. Thus, here again, the lines of evidence converge.

Furthermore, the Groa of the *Prose Edda* is married to an archer who bears the epithet *Örvandil*, "Arrow-handler." Örvandil, i.e. "Arrow-handler," is undeniably a name that resembles an epithet given to some famous mythical archer. When we consider how strong the polynomy is in Germanic mythology and in other mythologies, the researcher when faced with this name or epithet is obliged to advance the disjunctive premise: either the name Örvandil, although obviously of epithetical nature, is a lone standing name whose owner was not known or spoken of under any other name, or the mythic person called "Arrow-handler" has had one or more additional names. Naturally, in the question of "*either — or*" only a careful investigation can provide the answer…

2nd lawyer: Your Honor, such investigations are as unnecessary as they are tedious to make and certainly are boring to read. My honorable colleague's client, Mr. V. R. has filled a thick volume with such investigations. He can save himself the trouble if he, like my clients, had adhered to if he, like my clients, had adhered to the respectable and in itself not unreasonable dogma that a lucky twist of fate has preserved for prosperity all the synonyms in the *Eddas* that existed in the Germanic, or at least in the Norse, mythology.

The Judge: The disjunctive premise is correctly applied. Continue, 1st lawyer.

1st lawyer: I assume for the time being —but only for the time being and in expectation of the results of the investigation— that one or more synonyms for the name Örvandil exist. If such a synonym does exist, it must first and foremost be sought among the archers in the realm of Germanic legend. The finest archer that is mentioned in other passages there is Völund's brother, Egil. It seems to me, therefore, **[463]** already in and of itself reasonable that he before all others was characterized as "the Arrow-handler," i.e. Örvandil. But naturally, the investigation cannot rest on such an assumption. One must use the Real method and discover if characteristic similarities exist between what is told of "the Arrow-handler" and of the great archer Egil.

Örvandil lives by the Elivogar, where Thor shares an adventure in common with him. According to *Gylfaginning*,[41] the god once bore "Arrow-handler" on his shoulders through its stormy waters.

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[40] Saxo's *Danish History*, Book 1; *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 24.

[41] This actually occurs in *Skáldskaparmál*, further instances have been corrected.

Egil also lives by the Elivogar. Thor shares an adventure in common with him and on one occasion carries him on his shoulders through the stormy waters. This according to *Hymiskviða*, and *Þórsdrápa*.[42]

The German Orentel story also indicates that Orentel, i.e. Örvandil, was rescued from distress at sea by a "master" who had a fortress located on the sea, on whose opposite shore giants lived and built.[43]

The same German story associates the names Eigel (Egil), Orentel (Örvandil) and Wieland (Völund). In the Norse story, Egil is Völund's brother. Of the young hero, Egil's son, the German story relates the same adventure as ascribed to Groa's son, Svipdag. He goes out in quest of the world's most beautiful woman, as does Svipdag.

I am convinced, your Honor, that you do not miss the implications of this evidence. If the author, or more correctly the compiler, of the German story of Orentel did not have some tradition originating from mythology as the basis for his account, but freely chose the names of those appearing along with Orentel in the story, he had thousands of names to choose from and even could have devised new ones. How great then is the probability that he would have chosen the names Eigel (Egil) and Wieland (Völund), which are associated in the Norse sources, and which ascribe the same adventure to Egil that the German story ascribes to Orentel-Örvandil? **[464]**

Further, your Honor, when *Thidreks Saga af Bern* says that Völund's brother, Egil, shot an apple off of his son's head with an arrow and the same is said of the Urian Tell, and when it is said of Egil as well as of the Urian Tell that he thereafter traveled to a stronghold situated on the sea, both refer to the same archer, because "the Urian Tell" has to thank for his origin an older "Oren Tel," which is none other than Orentel.[44]

Because Groa is Örvandil's wife, according to the tradition in *Skáldskaparmál*, and because the congruence pointed out above convincingly certifies Egil's and Örvandil's identity (for which many other equally valid reasons can be presented), it follows thereby, your Honor, that Örvandil's wife, Groa, is Egil's wife, Groa, and that consequently Örvandil-Egil is the father or stepfather of Groa's son, Svipdag. This is also confirmed in that the young hero of the Orentel story, who is said to be Egil's son there, undergoes the same remarkable adventure as Svipdag, the son of Groa.

Is it not worthy of remark, your Honor, that whichever starting point one may choose in this matter, lines that converge toward the same result may be formed? Here is a further example. The German tale's Orentel catches fish for a "master" who had rescued him from drowning in the sea on which the land of giants is situated. In the Norse myth, when Thor, who rescues Egil from drowning, leaves Egil's fortress by the sea to

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[42] The conclusion that Egil dwells by the Elivogar and that his house is a way-station on Thor's journeys to Jötunheim is based primarily on *Hymiskviða* 7, 37, and 38 compared to *Gylfaginning* 44, see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology* Vol. 1, no. 108. The conclusion that Thor once carried Egil on his shoulders through the Elivogar, however, is based on a faulty reading of *Þórsdrápa*, found in Vol. 1, no. 114, and cannot be substantiated.

[43] The text of the German poem *Orentel* can be found in *Spielmannsepen* Vol. II, Wissenschaftliche Buchgestellschaft, Darmstadt, 1976, pp. 131-266. For a discussion of the poem, see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 107.

[44] Here Rydberg refers to the Swiss tale of William Tell (originally Tell of the canton Uri). See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. II, Part 2, pp. 157-158. See also Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie*, ch. 15, section 5: "Orentil, Wielent, Mimi, Tell, &c" [Stalleybrass tr.].

roam in the land of giants, he carries herring, according to *Hárbarðsljóð*,[45] for his food, and, in a metaphor alluding to the myth of Egil, a heathen skald refers to arrows as "the quick-herring of Egil's hands."[46]

Now, back to Groa in Saxo. As we know, the Danish historian says that Groa was carried off by King Gram even though her hand belonged to another man. If Saxo's Groa is the same as the Groa of *Svipdagsmál* and the *Prose Edda*, her husband would be Örvandil-Egil. Under these circumstances, King Gram and Egil must have been enemies. Does confirmation of this result exist anywhere? Yes, your Honor. **[465]**

Before my client, V.R., did so, Danish researchers into Saxo had already pronounced their view that both kings, Gram and Halfdan Berggram, were originally the same person. In the first volume of his *Investigations into Germanic Mythology* (no. 23), my client has presented evidence for the correctness of this view, and against this evidence no attempt at rebuttal is known to have been made. Saxo relates that King Halfdan Berggram is resisted by two foes, of which one bears the name Anund. Anund, your Honor, is another name for Völund. *Völundarkviða* itself informs us that Völund bore this name.[47] The other enemy carries the same name as an archer to which Saxo attributes the story of the crack shot that Völund's brother Egil makes in *Thidreks Saga af Bern* and that the Urian Tell (Orentel) makes in the Swiss story. [48] Völund and Egil have thus been Gram-Halfdan's enemies. This is further confirmed in that Saxo allows a Svipdag to appear as Gram's irreconcilable foe and killer. Svipdag, Egil's son, must avenge his father. Saxo's Groa thus must be the Groa of *Svipdagsmál* and the *Prose Edda*. Saxo's Svipdag thus must be the Svipdag of *Svipdagsmál*.

Svipdag's family relationship and fate thus place him in the closest connection to the Völund myth. Can this result also be confirmed by the songs of Völund and Svipdag that are preserved in the *Poetic Edda*? The only poem in the *Poetic Edda* that says anything about the adventures of Völund under this name is *Völundarkviða*, as your Honor knows, and it is fragmentary. On the other side, *Svipdagsmál*, as it has come down to our time, only speaks of certain episodes in the hero's life. Under such circumstances, it would not be unusual if the epic connection that must have existed between Völund's and Svipdag's adventures could not be demonstrated from these fragments. But, your Honor, it is fortunate that the connection is demonstrable.[49]

For *Völundarkviða* says that the elf-prince Völund, during his exile in the Wolfdales, owned a remarkable arm-ring and forged a sword upon which he bestowed all his art. **[466]** But before he could use the sword for the purpose that his limitless lust for revenge inspired, he was ambushed in his sleep by the underworld ruler Nidhad —

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[45] *át ek i hvild, aðr ek heiman for, silldr ok hafra*, *Hárbarðsljóð* 3.

[46] *Heimskringla* (*Haralds saga Gráfeldar*, ch. 17) states that Eyvind Skaldaspiller once, when famine prevailed, exchanged his arrows for herring. He says that in exchange for "the arrows of the sea" (*örum sævar*) i.e. herring, he gave "the quick-herrings of Egil's hands" (*mínar hlaupsíldr Egils gaupna*), i.e. his arrows.

[47] *Völundarkviða* 2, *Codex Regius*: *þeirra systir*/ *varði hvítan* /*háls Onondar*. "Their sister threw her arms around Anund's white neck." Onondar (Anund) is typically emended to Völund.

[48] See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 108. In Saxo's *Danish History*, Book 10, King Harald Bluetooth forces the archer Toko to shoot an apple off his son's head. (See Oliver Elton's translation, Appendix I, pp. 391-2); In *Þidreks Saga af Bern*, ch. 75, King Nidung forces Egil to perform the same task. Notably, in both tales, the archer removes three arrows from his quiver, stating that the other two were for vengeance in case the first arrow had missed and struck the boy.

[49] See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 98.

Nidhad means "Underworld being" — who came to Völund's smithy at night, accompanied by Njarar. Nidhad seized the sword and the arm-ring, the latter being worn later by his daughter. Nidhad's wife had Völund hamstrung so that he could not fly away and carry out his plans for revenge. In the arm-ring was a flaw whose remedy Nidhad's daughter sought and received in a manner that *Völundarkviða* more closely describes.[50]

We now turn to *Svipdagsmál*, which mentions a smith who forged a sword, *hævateinn*, far away from the world of men.[51] But before the smith could make use of it, he, like Völund, was robbed of it, and the person who stole it, like Nidhad, took it down to the underworld where the world-mill is situated.[52] The sword was entrusted for preservation to a woman who is named "Sinew-maimer" (*Sinmara*), no doubt because in connection with the story of *hævateinn* it was said that she who received it for safekeeping had severed someone's sinews, as had Nidhad's queen. She, or perhaps another woman who stood in the closest connection to her and who lived with her, was called "Eir of the arm-ring."[53] She thus must have been adorned with a famous arm-ring mentioned in some sort of connection to *hævateinn*, as Nidhad's daughter was adorned with an arm-ring mentioned in connection with the Völund sword. The name Eir signifies "the healing, the curative dis." When the subterranean dis is characterized as "the healing dis of the arm-ring," this designation, if it was well-chosen, refers to what is said about this arm-ring, and of Nidhad's daughter's arm-ring, that it required mending and that the mending was effected in some manner by the woman who wore it.[54]

The Njars, over which "the Subterranean" (Nidhad) rules, are Nari's clan-folk. According to *Gylfaginning* 10, Nari's daughter is Night.[55] In *Svipdagsmál*, the "sinew-maimer" is described as the dark, the "ash-colored" giantess.[56] **[467]**

Svipdag, who is Egil's son and Völund's nephew is predestined by fate to obtain *hævateinn*. In its quest, he proceeds to the world-mill, fares across subterranean rivers, encounters "Night on the *nifl*-ways," and meets with Mimir and the "sinew-maimer"

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[50] Völund plied her with alcohol and, while she was unconscious, impregnated her.

[51] Verse 26: *Hævateinn hann heitir/ en hann gerði Loftur ruin/ fyr nágrindur neðan*; "Its name is *Hævateinn*, made by Loftur, and robbed from him, below the gates of death."

[52] *Fjölsvinnsmál* 30.

[53] *Fjölsvinnsmál* 28 designates her as *Eiri Aurglasis* ("Eir of Aurglasir"). The meaning of *Aurglasis* is disputed, but is perhaps best explained as "Mud-Glasir," juxtaposed to *Veðurglasi* ("Weather-Glasir") of v. 24. [See "*Germanic Myths of Proto-Indo-European Origin*" footnotes **Error! Bookmark not defined.** and **Error! Bookmark not defined.**.] Rydberg bases the reading "arm-ring" on Bugge's edition. An arm-ring, however, is also associated with a subterranean sword kept by Mimingus (Mimir) in Saxo's *Danish History*, Book 3. The invincible sword and the ring "with the miraculous hidden power of increasing its owner's wealth" [Fisher tr.] are retrieved from the underworld by the hero Hotherus, whom Rydberg demonstrates is probably a conflation of Baldur's brother Höður and Freyja's husband Óðr, both of which can be Latinized as Hotherus. See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 101.

[54] *Gylfaginning* 35 lists Eir as a physician among goddesses. Thus Sinmara may be designated the "healing dis of Aurglasir, i.e. the lower half of the world-tree" (rather than "of the arm-ring"). This is reminiscent of the Norns who lave the Tree with water from Urd's well, and fits her role as Mimir's wife.

[55] *Gylfaginning* 10 gives the name of Night's father as *Nörfi eða Narfi*, "Nörfi or Narfi" *in Codex Regius* [*Konungsbókar*]; *Nörvi eða Narvi*, "Nörvi or Narvi" in *Codex Wormianus* [*Wormsbókar*]; and simply *Nóri* in *Codex Upsalensis* [*Uppsalabók*]. For a comparative analysis of these names, see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 85.

[56] *fölva gýgur fegin*, *Fjölsvinnsmál* 29.

(Sinmara), who for certain compensation surrenders *hævateinn* to him. *Svipdagsmál* informs us of this.[57]

Your Honor, I need only have presented these facts, in order for your sound mind to establish, without further commentary from me, that a connection exists between *Völundarkviða* and *Svipdagsmál*, so that as far as their contents are concerned, the later is simply a sequel to the former. Völund's sword is *hævateinn*.

With this, your Honor, I have chosen to give you and your assistants in justice, an idea of the method my client has followed in his investigations. The point just discussed has been considered the weakest in his work, that which best lends itself to attack by an opponent. Nevertheless, I regard it as secure from all attacks, on the grounds I have presented.

But the method he has used is new in the realm of mythology and the results, to which he has come, are unexpected and incompatible with most of what has previously been written on the subject. For this reason, it is his duty not to immediately expect, but patiently await, the common acknowledgement of the certainty of the results, and it then will be his pleasure to see the details in which he may be mistaken corrected and his method pursued toward the goal that he did not dare to put forward himself.

The first lawyer concludes with the resulting evidence that if one observes these many converging factors in accordance with the principle of least cause and the proportional relationship between homonymy and non-homonymy, then one will simultaneously find unexpected causal-connections among the mythic events, satisfying in all points, which absolutely cannot be regarded as chance.[58] **[468]**

The second lawyer objects that the resulting testimony**,** situated within the context that is attained in this way**,** is proof that this methodological way is the wrong way, since no cohesion among mythic concepts can be accepted**.** He further points out, how incorrect it is to draw therefrom the conclusion that no mythological investigation is possible. An investigation is possible when it merely adheres to being congenial to a certain degree to the chaos in which one researches, and as proof of the possibility of such investigations, he presents numerous works on mythology before the judge's bench. The first lawyer suffers, he says, from a mania. He has before him fragments of hope, which he believes to be pieces of a shattered vase. He compares the edges of the fragments and pieces them together, as if every edge suited another, thus getting a patched up vase, which he imagines actually formed such a whole. He does not consider what role chance plays in the world — here especially chance, which appears in the form of analogy. Chance can make the broken edges of two fragments, which were never associated, appear suitable to one another, and if this is possible for two, it is also possible for a thousand.

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[57] See *Gróugaldur* 8, 11, and 13; and *Fjölsvinnsmál* 24, 26, and 30.

[58] Three recent scholars who have recognized such a causal connection between the myths are Margaret Clunies Ross in *Prolonged Echoes*, Vol. I (1994), pp. 229-242 "Concepts of Time in Old Norse Myth"; Eleazar M. Meletinskij (also Meletinsky) in 'Scandinavian Mythology as a System", *The Journal of Symbolic Anthropology* 1-2, 42-58 and 57-58 (1973-4) and *The Elder Edda and Early Forms of the Epic* (Translated by Kenneth H. Ober, 1998), p. 94 ff.; and John Lindow in *Handbook of Norse Mythology* (2001), pp. 39-45.

The following questions can be asked and ought to be answered: how was it possible that myths as old as the Proto-Indo-European era were passed down in such stable condition that a parallel between the Asiatic Indo-European myth-complex and the Germanic myth-complex can be shown to have existed? Must one not draw the conclusion from this that the Teutons, like their Indo-European kinfolk, had priests who guarded the mythic treasure and passed it on, as unaffected as possible from transforming influences, generation after generation? If the composition of myths was free — and who could imprison it? — **[469]** after all the impulses of imagination and capacity for immensely rich combinations, how could it not have influenced the existing myths, transforming their former elements into other forms, changing with every generation?

The Teutons essentially had a priesthood that certainly did not rule them, but nevertheless possessed rights that other classes did not, and it exercised considerable influence. They also had skalds and bards who celebrated gods and heroes, as far back as historical evidence goes. They possessed an ancient treasure of mythological songs by the time of Christ's birth, according to the testimony of Tacitus. Religious services and sacrificial ceremonies also demanded a knowledge of ritual among them. (*Veistu hve biðja skal? Veistu hve blóta skal? Veistu hve senda skal? Veistu hve sóa skal? Hávamál* 144).[59] It is, thus, far from impossible that the myths had their official guardians among the Teutons as they did among the Indo-Iranian Aryans, the Celts, and the Romans. But to accentuate this is not necessary to explain the occurrence.

The unimpeded composition of narratives is neither as independent nor as active on existing products as one is usually inclined to assume, if one does not engage in folkloristic studies. The composition of narratives moves within a far from limitless number of story-types. On the contrary, the number is closely restricted. Their variants can certainly amount to an unpredictable quantity, but even these variants lead a battle for existence. Each century may have given birth to many variant story-types, but only those that most actively appeal to the power of imagination persist through human ages, and the final results of the productivity of millennia in this regard are not surprisingly great, but surprisingly small. That narrative compositions that did not concern gods or heroes had **[470]** any strong influence on the existing tales about them in itself is not likely either; those among the former that were particularly impressive at their height may have had indirect influence on the latter through the power of analogy. Again, in the event that they did not contain some particularly intriguing novelty that could take root among the people and in the event that they did not have points of contact with the traditional narratives in some manner, the new narratives that referred to gods and heroes must have died out soon after their birth. But in the opposite case, they would have been incorporated with them. It is undoubtedly in such fashion that the Germanic mythology expanded beyond its Proto-Indo-European dimensions. Still, the narrative compositions that became the object of this fate must have been especially rare.

From the standpoint of independent narrative compositions, nothing in particular exists to hinder old myths being preserved in a relatively unchanged condition**,** but there is a good chance that they will be expanded upon with new myths. More important are the internal reasons for change, since they must appear by the very fact of changes in the

[59] "Do you know how to pray (ask)? Do you know how to *blót* (offer through sacrifice)? Do you know how to how to send? Do you know how to sacrifice (slaughter)?" *Hávamál* 144.

peoples' level of culture and manner of comprehension.[60] But among the Teutons, the level of culture was obviously very slow to change — Proto-Indo-European customs are still found among the Teutons in Tacitus' time, as far as our controls in this matter go, and among the customs that were prevalent among the Nordic Teutons then, many were well preserved into the Christian era — and these changes from internal causes must have appeared in the moral perfection of the gods' characters more so than in the mythic adventures themselves.

It should finally be pointed out that the power of mythic traditions to resist the ravages of time is demonstrably much greater than that of language. A radical religious revolution is required to break the former, and even when it is broken, the memory survives, nevertheless, in concealed or in Christian disguise[61] through the human ages, through centuries and through millennia. Language, on the other hand, can experience stark changes during short periods without having been subjected to a revolutionary crisis. The inscriptions on Norway's oldest rune-stones are rather like a Gothic dialect and differ considerably from 8th and 9th century speech-forms.

Similarly, the Swedish that is spoken today still bears evidence of its relationship with the language of the Sanskrit-Aryans. If one of them returned to life and lived **[471]** as a guest for a while in a Swedish peasant's hut, both would both probably begin to suspect this relationship when they found that the one's *mother* compares to the other's *mâtar, son* to *sûnu, daughter* to *duhitar,* and *brother* to *bhrâtar.* The *door* behind which they make these comparisons, the inhabitant of the Indus Valley would call *dur; oxen* and *cows* that graze outside, he would call *ukshan* and *go*. When the stuff of words, so corruptible, so susceptible to all influence, can still show such an affinity, what is it when the stuff of myths, which is *ære perennius*,[62] preserves as much as it does unchanged from the same time? Family feasts, wedding feasts, private parties, births, diseases among humans and livestock, death, burial, seasonal changes, farming, and other peaceable ceremonies, traveling expeditions, and war expeditions, all were bound with reminders from myth, from mythic stories, and incantations or holy formulas. Hymns that glorified the deeds of the gods and the heroes were sung at the Indo-Europeans' sacrifices; heroic songs shortened their time by the hearth. Everything holy and everything unholy, everything beneficial and everything harmful, all these were associated with the concepts of gods and demons. All knowledge, all culture bore the stamp of myth. It should seem odder that myths would suffer changes by degrees under such conditions than that they were preserved**,** even if they were not protected by a holy and inviolable reputation, and even if a priesthood did not guard them.

After Christianity had conquered heathenism, the stories of gods and heroes and the blessing formulas still survived in the converted peoples' memories. The need for songs and stories was not annulled by Christianity's victory. It survived and found satisfaction not only from the new treasures that Christianity opened, but more than that,

[60] An example of this is weapons technology. As new weapons are invented or come into use, they would also eventually be introduced into the mythology.
[61] Assuming the religious revolution was a conversion to Christianity.
[62] "more durable than bronze"

and especially, from ancient heathen treasures that were converted, partially conscious not to bear the outmoded heathen stamp, partially unconscious and due to **[472]** a natural psychological process, and partially because, under the influence of Christianity, the traditions lost more and more of their stability and their connection with every generation. The heathen formulas were changed to Christian formulas: St. Michael mounted Odin's horse, St. Stephan mounted Baldur's. Sibba (Sif) became a sibyl and queen Seba, who took advantage of Christ. Gods, such as Odin and Hönir, who had walked incognito in society together among human beings, became our Lord (Jesus Christ) and St. Peter, who on such journeys tested the temperaments and hospitality of mortals. Thor carrying Egil over the Elivogar became the giant who bore the Christ child through the waves and therefore was called *Christophorus*,[63] and, in connection with this, Egil's star became a symbol of Christ. A volume could be filled with descriptions of this kind of transformation.[64] The creations that the surviving epic instinct formed from material and motive collected from the epics of the gods and heroes also belong there. As I have shown in this work, such new formations are the poems about Helgi Hjörvardsson (with the material and motive from the Baldur myth)[65] and Helgi Hundingsbane (with material and motive from the heroic saga about Halfdan)[66], the songs about Sigurd Fafnisbane (that partially collect their material from the myth of Hödur's youthful adventures)[67] and those about Dieterich of Bern and his Amalians (that collect their material and motive from the hero-sagas of Halfdan's and Hamal's descendents).[68]

It is apparent that during the re-creating and remodeling of material from heathendom's ruins, a good many analogous formations that previously had not existed, would arise. Some mythologists therefore have assumed that a chaos of analogous formations already existed within heathendom when it was still undisturbed; they have considered this a permanent condition which was a consequence of the revolution of faith that was penetrating into all circumstances of life, and thereby they have made the same mistake as if they had assumed that a city whose foundation had been destroyed by an earthquake would have the same appearance before and after it. With this, I do not deny that analogous formations occurred in every era within the realm of sagas and poems. I merely observe **[473]** that the analogous formations that had something to do with the myths must have occurred under entirely different conditions, when heathendom still stood, rather than in the human ages that followed the fall of heathendom. Above, I have pointed out the method according to which analogous formations, of whatever origin they are, should be treated by researchers. With what I now say, I have chosen only to reiterate that their existence constitutes no evidence for the opinion of the weather-mythologists that epic associations among the myths did not exist. I will add that analytical and synthetic treatments of analogous formations, when they are performed methodically, are almost without risk, even if an analogous formation that perhaps is older than the revolution of faith is treated as if it arose after the fall of heathendom. Because to the

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[63] "Christ-helper".

[64] For explanations of these specific transformations see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 13 (Seba); no. 99 (Egil's star); Vol. II, Part 2, ch. III, pp. 45-61 (Heathen gods as wandering Christian saints); ch. V, p. 164 (Egil as St. Christopher).

[65] See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. II, Part 2, ch. IV. pp. 62-73.

[66] See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, nos. 23-33, etc.

[67] See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. II, Part 2, ch. IV. pp. 73-90.

[68] See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, nos. 34-43, etc

same degree that an analogous formation *is* an analogous formation, the similarity is as great to the same degree between the products that are compared on the basis of their analogous nature and perhaps equated by researchers. And to the same degree as the similarity is great, the risk diminishes that through identification foreign elements will be imported into the epic context that the researcher has the task of restoring. Through methodological rigor this risk can be entirely removed.

Faced with the blending of heathen and Christian elements that a considerable part of the research material displays, which must be addressed by the mythologist, one can say with complete certainty: "Much of that which wears Christian clothing is heathen in its origin." One can say this with certainty, because no revolution in faith no matter how powerful it is can terminate the historical continuity and all at once divert the powerful stream of concepts and ideas that have flowed through the souls of numberless generations. This premise: "much of that which wears Christian clothing is of heathen origin" is that which Grimm and his school applied in their research and it is not only justified, it is psychologically and historically necessary and shall endure as the primary premise for the scientific mythology's research into this **[474]** blended material, although for the moment it is left unobserved by many, [69] essentially because of Bugge's influence.

Alongside this premise and not necessarily in opposition to it, one can place another: "A considerable amount of what appears to be heathen-Germanic is of Roman-pagan and Roman-Christian origin due to Roman influence on the heathen Teutons."

This premise, made by Bugge, cannot be rejected in and of itself as illegitimate. Therefore, with every investigation of the material in which the heathen and Christian elements seem to be united in one manner or another, one is correct to consider the primary premise (that followed by Grimm) as well as the secondary premise (that followed by Bugge). On one side, we have a certainty, resting on a folk-psychological basis and richly confirmed by the historian, that the pure heathen myths, stories, and blessings-formulas survived heathendom's fall and were preserved (noteworthily enough) in their heathen dress, yet more often in Christian disguise, through many human eras, even into our day. I have presented one among the great many examples of this in the treatise on the Baldur myth, where we saw Odin and Baldur appear in a blessing-formula in the form of Michael and St. Stephanus, and where we saw that a considerable amount of the Stephanus legends are nothing more than Christian echoes of the Baldur myth. On the other side, there is of course a historic possibility that Roman-pagan elements during contacts between the heathen-Germanic and the Roman world trickled, so to speak, into the Germanic cycle of myths and became incorporated into it, however unbelievable it may seem that this occurred as Bugge imagined the details of this course of events.

In the treatment of the matter, whichever principle is applicable in each individual case, one must observe the following:

1) How Roman heathendom and Roman Christianity may have influenced the Teutons, while they still were heathens, quantitatively and qualitatively must have been small in comparison **[475]** with how Roman Christianity affected the Teutons and their traditions originating from heathendom after they, the Teutons, had become Christianized —since their old religion was condemned and their intellectual life was placed under a daily, systematic Roman influence, organized across all of their territory. It follows that

[69] This has remained true for most of the 20th century, and still continues to this day.

what Bugge aims to find with his investigations, can, if it exists at all, only be found sporadically, while the other premise, the one used by Grimm, must concern the vast majority of the material for research that is of a blended nature. Thereby, it follows again that if the blending can be explained in a simple and completely satisfactory manner in accordance with the primary premise (Grimm's), it contradicts scientific method to disregard it and present the explanation in accordance with the secondary premise, which has only a possibility, and not a psychological necessity, to be cited for its right to be taken into consideration, and that, in case it is applicable, can only be so in unusual cases.

2) In most cases, reliable evidence can be presented that certain stories, formulas, and legends that appear in Christian guise, are of heathen origin. The certainty of the evidence rests on two bases: one positive, which is that we again find stories, formulas, or legends, whose ideas and facts are referred to in heathen sources; and one negative, which is that the same ideas and facts are not rediscovered in Christian documents or in Christian traditions that are reliably older than the conversion of the Germanic people to Christianity. If the negative reason for the certainty of the evidence can be made doubtful by the means that certain isolated points of similarity can be demonstrated within Christian traditions, one should discover of what percentage these similarities are and whether they cannot be shown to exist in a still higher degree between the Germanic myths and the Asiatic Indo-European myths. In this case, the similarities provide no conclusive evidence whatsoever for the assertion that they arose through Roman influence on Germanic heathendom. **[477]**

3) The quality of pure heathenism in the heathen-Germanic sources (for example *Völuspá*) cannot be assailed from the standpoint of scientific methodology so long as one is not able to discover elements in them that are not possibly authentically heathen in origin. In order to prepare the way for the application of the secondary premise, one seeks to make the heathen sources suspect by pointing out similarities with Christian concepts in them; when these similarities are of the type that I most recently pointed out, one commits the error which Bugge made all too often, called *circulus in demonstrando*.[70] In this way, one can also prove that the main ideas in the Zoroastrian religion originated in Christianity. If these elements of the Zoroastrian religion were not demonstrably centuries older than Christianity, one would undoubtedly have witnessed attempts made in the same manner and with the assistance of the same methodological error that in our day actually is utilized to show that the Germanic myths originated in Christianity.

In a few words: before one attempts to show the influences of Roman-pagan and Roman-Christian concepts on the existing myths of Germanic heathendom with the assistance of *Gylfaginning* and similar materials, one should see how far he can go, if he, with obedience to the directive of methodology, follows the premise pointed out above, which rests on the basis of psychological necessity, instead of resorting to a principle resting only on possibility, and in the best case, only exceptionally valid, such as the one applied by Bugge. Beforehand, one should investigate what the comparative method can establish with reference to the contents of the Indo-European myths and one should investigate what influence the concepts of Christian-times had on *Gylfaginning* and its coequals among the evidence utilized. The neglect of this has been punished in that one

[70] A circular argument, i.e. using what one is attempting to prove as evidence, or restating the premise in the conclusion.

takes the Roman influence on the latter[71] for a Roman influence on the Germanic myths. Thus, I will not say that Bugge's mythological investigations **[477]** were made in vain. The diligent and painstaking, and in many instances astute, research to which they attest, in particular has led to many observations, previously unmade, which are of permanent worth and which I also have been eager to point out, above all in this work, where the occasion to do so arose.

A scientific theory of poetry is an indispensable tool for the mythologist, whose raw material is of the poetic kind and whose documents in large part consist of poems.

Mythology's development toward science has been obstructed from two directions, both in opposition to one another. On one side stands a flock of dreamers, paradox-hunters, and shadow-catchers, who imagine that any whim whatsoever is admissible in questions concerning the understanding of the myths and the interpretation of their contents, because according to their opinion mythology by its nature is the promised land of unregulated fancy. If this were actually the case, if the creations of mythology were not bound by psychological laws and explainable as natural products of influences from the external world of phenomena, as well as from the social, cultural, and religious concepts that gradually make themselves applicable, involve the people's development, and seek expression in their sacred stories; if the wider tradition that seeks to retain the mythic treasure once acquired and leave it as unaltered as possible from generation to generation, had nothing at all to denote in comparison to an unregulated and unfettered imagination's influence on the formation of myth, and thus if one were correct to consider the realm of myth as the unbound imagination's promised land — one still would be absolutely wrong to believe that unfettered imagination should have any right to *interpret* and *explain* the products that an unfettered imagination has created. In a scientific sense, an unfettered imagination can explain nothing, because it **[478]** is the exact opposite of scientific method. It can only contribute new whims to those that it believes it explains.

On the other side stand the imaginationless, those who set imagination aside and engage in interpreting the poetic products. Fortunately, it is now thanks to great explorers in the field of the exact sciences who have observed and reflected upon the mental course of events that led them to their discoveries —a *locus communis*[72] that imaginationless investigators can gather facts and in this regard be useful and worthy of respect, but they are not in a position to lead the science even one inch forward, because collected facts mean nothing to science other than as material that is first put into scientific service when it is combined and when, from these combinations, relationships that can be generalized as laws or at least be interpreted as references to laws are made clear. Such a combination cannot be made without imagination, because — apart from all the mystery that one wants to find in this sort of mental activity —imagination is an ability to survey clearly related concepts and groups of ideas and to combine them at some given point into a new group. This happens in accordance with the laws of logic. In other words, since the imagination does not work torn loose from its natural connection with mental operations,

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[71] i.e. *Gylfaginning* and similar materials.

[72] Common place: a theme or argument of general application.

the product (a poetic product, if the grouping is skalds) becomes characterized by the logical connection**,** the soundness and clarity that the poems possess, when self-criticism holds Pegasus' reins.[73] And if the grouping is natural scientists, the product is characterized by a generalization that becomes a scientific truth, after it has been proven and confirmed by experimentation.

I was led to these reflections by the way in which the theory of poetry, which is one of the mythologist's indispensable tools, was previously employed in the field of Germanic mythological research and the explanation of poetry. This is striking evidence that imaginationless men not only are in no position to find anything new, but are also in no position to realize mistakes in learned routine, even if it is **[479]** infected with the grossest absurdity. In all areas, pioneers are few and the slaves of habit many; this applies even to linguistics. To this day, the poetic theory that one applies is still the Icelandic-Christian model, which was applicable in the time of *Gylfaginning*'s author, and which is roughly related to the actual poetic theory as *Gylfaginning*'s speculations concerning our Trojan origin are related to a methodological investigation of the Teutons' actual place among the races of people.

I have already had occasion to characterize this false but commonly used poetic theory, by which all mythological designations whose actual meanings were forgotten by a later time, as having conferred a faded generalized meaning, which upon closer inspection usually appears to be incorrect. With a collection of lists of names as an armory, in which the names of actual or alleged dwarves, giants, sea-kings, etc. were collected and presented as synonyms, this theory of poetry states that one can take whichever dwarf-name, giant-name, etc. he wishes from these lists to designate any particular dwarf, giant, sea-king, or hero or heroic family he desires. No one seems to have considered that in heathen times, when the names designated personalities known and characterized in the mythology, such a theory of poetry would have been as impossible for the Norse skalds as would a poetic theory for the Greeks that took Prometheus for Hephæestos, Hephæstos for Dædalus, Odysseus for a Peliad, or Achilles for a Lærtiad.

A consequence of this has been that one never entered into an investigation of the mythological material and the mythic relationships that exist in the poetic comparisons that the historical poems of Norse heathendom contain, because on good authority one assumes that the mythological names used in them only have a general meaning and can be substituted with any other name one wishes from *Skáldskaparmál*'s lists of names; one has never sought the mythological kernels that are to be found in the comparisons in question, nor has anyone sought to investigate **[480]** the laws of their formation. The most important chapter in the actual heathen poetics, namely the establishment of laws for what I will call "the synthetic paraphrase" thus has been set aside and the treasure of mythological information that is preserved in these paraphrases has never been taken advantage of, before I attempted to do so.[74]

Here are some words to clarify what a combined synthetic-poetic comparison means to say. The Greek and Roman poets, like modern poets, describe their poetic comparisons in analytical form; however, in theirs, the Norse heathen skalds worked out,

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[73] Pegasus, the winged horse from Greek mythology, here used as a symbol for imagination.

[74] [Rydberg's footnote:] For this reason, it makes me happy that my attempt has been noticed and acknowledged in Germany.

or more correctly worked in, a synthesis. As we know, analytical comparisons resemble an equation: they contain two parts, joined with an equal sign. Synthetic comparisons are presented as a seeming whole: their parts are worked into one another, and the equal sign between them is hidden. The skalds expect their listeners or readers to discover it through analysis and separate the two joined parts.

As an illustration of this, I have chosen an example from Virgil and have imagined how a Norse heathen skald would take a Virgilian comparison and give it the synthetic form prescribed by his own poetic art

Virgil says of the young Trojan Eurylaus that he collapses under a Rutulian weapon, "as a purple flower, cut down by the plough, droops dying or as a tall poppy sinks its head, when weighted down by the driving rain." (*Aeneid,* Book IX).

This comparison is analytical. It has two parts: on one side, the handsome dying youth; on the other side, the purple flower cut down by the plough or the poppy bending in the rains. The equal sign between the two parts of the equation is represented by an "as."

The Old Norse skald does not allow himself an "as." Instead of the clarity on the surface that the analytical **[481]** form presents, he draws pleasure from a mental operation through which clarity is won by means of a certain measure of reflection. He makes the Virgilian comparison in roughly the following form: "the purple flower of the Trojan, cut down by the plough of battle, droops dying; the weight of the hail of swords and showers of arrows sink the head of the Idaean plains' high-raised battle-poppy, Euryalus."

It is in this manner that the Norse skaldic artists who composed historical poems proceeded. But at the foundation of their synthesis almost always lies a comparison between a hero the skald celebrates and a mythic personality, and a comparison between one of the former's deeds or fates and one of the latter's. My investigation has presented many examples of this. See for example the analysis of the verse in *Vellekla*: *Ok herþarfir hverfa*, etc. in the first volume of this work (no. 53) and another verse in the same poem (no. 113, 20). In many cases, the results of these analyses cast a surprisingly clear light on the contents and connections of the myths.[75]

Mythology is not a linguistic science. It is a historical science, specifically a science of cultural history, of the history of ideas, and of the history of religion. One should be thankful, however, that linguistics adopted this Cinderella among sciences under its roof. Otherwise, she would currently be homeless. She has to accept that the people of the house, who at times lack the necessary prerequisites to understand her, treat her accordingly. I do not doubt that a remarkable linguist also can educate himself into a remarkable mythologist. Example shows that this is possible. I merely believe that one is as little a mythologist as he is a historian or archeologist, or initiated into the philosophical development of religious ideas, simply because he studied linguistics — a

[75] The nature of skaldic poetry was not well understood before the work of Rudolf Meissner, *Die Kenningar der Skalden* (1921). Thus, throughout Rydberg's work, the evidence he draws from skaldic poetry is generally, but not always, flawed. Two excellent modern works on skaldic poetry are *The Structure of Old Norse Dróttkvætt Poetry* by Kari Ellen Gade (1995) and Eysteinn Björnsson's *Lexicon of Kennings* at http://www.hi.is/~eybjorn/ugm/kennings/kennings.html (2001).

reminder that is justified, because one often finds that linguists, without proper knowledge **[482]** of the cultural-historical and mythological materials and without awareness of the research-method applicable to mythology, seat themselves as judges in mythological matters. The linguist's position to the mythologist is the same as to the historian in the common meaning of this word. He must present in unaltered form, with all the versions and without all the so-called emendations, the written documents that the historian and the mythologist have to utilize, and to interpret them — not impartially because it demands more preliminary knowledge than just linguistics —but grammatically and formally. I hope that the day will come when mythology, recognized as an independent science, receives its own home.

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