

Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood Study Guide

Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood by Merlin Stone

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Contents

Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	8
Preface to the New Edition: Some New Mirrors.....	9
Preface.....	11
Introduction.....	12
Chapter 1, A Gentle Omnipotence—China.....	14
Chapter 2, Nu Kwa.....	15
Chapter 3, Kuan Yin.....	16
Chapter 4, Hsi Ho.....	17
Chapter 5, Tien Hou.....	18
Chapter 6, Mother Nature (Tao).....	19
Chapter 7, Gum Lin and Loy Yi Lung.....	20
Chapter 8, Mighty in Magic...and Wales.....	21
Chapter 9, Danu.....	22
Chapter 10, The Morrigan.....	23
Chapter 11, Macha.....	25
Chapter 12, Cerridwen.....	26
Chapter 13, Morgan le Fay and The Lady of the Lake.....	27
Chapter 14, Bridget.....	28
Chapter 15, Cailleach Bheur.....	29
Chapter 16, Maeve (Medb).....	30
Chapter 17, Rhiannon.....	31
Chapter 18, The Oneness...Central and South America.....	32
Chapter 19, Mu Olokukurtilisop.....	33



Chapter 20, Akewa.....	34
Chapter 21, Huitaca.....	35
Chapter 22, Coatlicue.....	36
Chapter 23, Chicomecoatl.....	37
Chapter 24, Teteu Innan.....	38
Chapter 25, Chalchiuilicue.....	39
Chapter 26, Bachue.....	40
Chapter 27, Mayuel.....	41
Chapter 28, Ix Chel.....	42
Chapter 29, Iamanja.....	43
Chapter 30, And from Chaos...Semites...and Arabia.....	44
Chapter 31, Mami Aruru.....	45
Chapter 32, Ishtar.....	46
Chapter 33, Atargatis.....	47
Chapter 34, Ashtart (Astarte, Ashtoreth).....	48
Chapter 35, Tiamat.....	49
Chapter 36, Asherah.....	50
Chapter 37, Anat.....	51
Chapter 38, Allat, Al Uzza, and Manat.....	52
Chapter 39, Hokhma.....	53
Chapter 40, Lilith.....	54
Chapter 41, The Shekhina.....	55
Chapter 42, Remind Them of the Sekpoli—Africa.....	56
Chapter 43, Mawu.....	57
Chapter 44, Ala.....	58
Chapter 45, Jezanna.....	59



Chapter 46, Songi.....	60
Chapter 47, Mboze and Bunzi.....	61
Chapter 48, Mbaba Mwana Waresa.....	62
Chapter 49, Mella.....	63
Chapter 50, To Watch over the People of the Islands—Oceania.....	64
Chapter 51, Pele.....	65
Chapter 52, Mahuea and Hina.....	66
Chapter 53, Kunapipi.....	68
Chapter 54, Fire Woman.....	69
Chapter 55, Star Girl.....	70
Chapter 56, Lia.....	71
Chapter 57, Arunta Sun Woman.....	72
Chapter 58, While Amazons Danced an Armed Dance—Anatolia.....	73
Chapter 59, Great Grandmother of Anatolia.....	74
Chapter 60, Sun Goddess of Arinna.....	75
Chapter 61, Hepat.....	76
Chapter 62, Hanna Hanna.....	77
Chapter 63, Kybele (Cybele).....	78
Chapter 64, Lato (Mother of Artemis).....	79
Chapter 65, Hecate.....	80
Chapter 66, Anahita.....	81
Chapter 67, From the Waters of the Indus—India.....	82
Chapter 68, Shakti.....	83
Chapter 69, Devi (Durga, Parvati, Laksmi, Tara).....	84
Chapter 70, Kali.....	85
Chapter 71, Anasuya.....	86



Chapter 72, Sarasvati.....	87
Chapter 73, The Goddesses of Assam.....	88
Chapter 74, Rangada.....	89
Chapter 75, Ushas.....	90
Chapter 76, Of Sea and Star and Serpent—Sumer.....	91
Chapter 77, Nammu.....	92
Chapter 78, Nina (Nintu, Nanshe, Ninmah, Ninhursag, Ninlil, Ningal).....	93
Chapter 79, Nidaba.....	94
Chapter 80, Inanna.....	95
Chapter 81, Ereshkigal.....	96
Chapter 82, She Who Makes the Universe Spin Round—Egypt.....	97
Chapter 83, Ua Zit.....	98
Chapter 84, Maat.....	99
Chapter 85, The Lady of the Amenta.....	100
Chapter 86, Seshat.....	101
Chapter 87, Hathor.....	102
Chapter 88, Neit.....	103
Chapter 89, Au Set (Isis).....	104
Chapter 90, Isis (after Apuleius).....	105
Chapter 91, To Walk the Trail of Beauty—Native Americans of North America.....	106
Chapter 92, Spider Woman.....	107
Chapter 93, Huring Wuhti.....	108
Chapter 94, Changing Woman.....	109
Chapter 95, White Shell Woman.....	110
Chapter 96, Asintmah.....	111
Chapter 97, Awehai.....	112



Chapter 98, Somagalags.....	113
Chapter 99, Queskapenek.....	114
Chapter 100, Spider Grandmother.....	115
Chapter 101, Sun Sister.....	116
Chapter 102, Pohaha.....	117
Chapter 103, Pasowee, the Buffalo Woman.....	118
Chapter 104, Wild Pony.....	119
Chapter 105, The Golden Mirror of Ise—Japan.....	120
Chapter 106, Fuji.....	121
Chapter 107, Izanami.....	122
Chapter 108, Amaterasu Omikami.....	123
Chapter 109, Ukemochi.....	124
Chapter 110, Yakami.....	125
Chapter 111, In the Land of Elves and Giants—Scandinavia.....	126
Chapter 112, Ilmatar.....	127
Chapter 113, Freyja.....	128
Chapter 114, Nerthus and Urth (The Norns).....	129
Chapter 115, Iduna.....	130
Chapter 116, Mielikki.....	131
Chapter 117, Frigga.....	132
Chapter 118, Skadi.....	133
Chapter 119, Hella.....	134
Chapter 120, The Primeval Prophetess—Greece, Crete, and the Aegean.....	135
Chapter 121, Nikta (Night).....	136
Chapter 122, Gaia (Ge).....	137
Chapter 123, Themis and Dike.....	138



[Chapter 124, Demeter and Kore \(Persephone\)..... 139](#)

[Chapter 125, Hera..... 140](#)

[Chapter 126, Aphrodite..... 141](#)

[Chapter 127, Hestia..... 142](#)

[Chapter 128, Artemis..... 143](#)

[Chapter 129, Athena..... 144](#)

[Characters..... 145](#)

[Objects/Places..... 163](#)

[Themes..... 165](#)

[Style..... 167](#)

[Quotes..... 169](#)

[Topics for Discussion..... 171](#)



Plot Summary

Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood is a comprehensive collection of Goddess legends and rituals from all over the world. The book is part history text, part anthropological record, and part anthology. It covers the tales from ancient civilizations, prehistoric tribes, and modern adaptations.

Every corner of the earth is covered and presented in *Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood*. From China to North America, from Scandinavia to Egypt, the Goddess legends teach the importance of respecting the earth. From the Sumerians to the Celts, from the Japanese to the Hellenic Greeks, the images of motherhood are held sacred. The wisdom of respect, humility and bravery emerge from Africa and ancient Anatolia.

Fragments of ancient tablets and long lost scrolls of papyri provide the prayers and descriptions of rituals. Temple inscriptions, cave murals, and collective memories provide the legends and myths of the world's Goddesses. Obscure rituals and lesser-known Goddesses are the basis for this book, while rare details of the more popular goddesses are also included. The book explores the effects of migrations of peoples and their interactions with one another on Goddess reverence. Ancient Goddess images that were suppressed or distorted by men and the dominant world religions are once again revealed in their original glory.



Preface to the New Edition: Some New Mirrors

Preface to the New Edition: Some New Mirrors Summary and Analysis

Merlin Stone's study of Goddess reverence begins with an adolescent fascination with the religions of the world, particularly those of ancient civilizations. Later involvement in the feminist movement of the sixties leads to a revelation that the world's major religions are "controlled by men." Furthermore, Stone feels that there is a lack of positive female role models for women. Thus, her first goal is born: Stone takes it upon herself to empower women by sharing her vast knowledge of Goddess reverence.

What initially starts as an article quickly grows in scope and results in two books. Stone begins her study of early civilizations of the Near East and Middle East. Soon she soon finds herself poring over the archaeological and ethnological materials of a myriad of cultures. Stone comes to the realization that most world cultures have at one time or another worshipped a female deity. A second goal is born for Stone as she realizes the global nature of Goddess reverence. Stone wishes her work to combat racism.

Stone asserts that sexism and racism are two sides of the same coin. She envisions that her work will lead to a global unity of millions of women, working together to create a better world. Stone is encouraged fourteen years after her first book, *When God Was A Woman*, by the number of women she sees having reclaimed knowledge of Goddess reverence.

Stone notes an interesting development in women's spirituality. The view of goddess is not transcendent; rather she is in every person and within all of nature. In addition, many women perceive Goddess as a flow of life energy. These perceptions naturally lead to a view that all nature and life as sacred. The sanctity of nature is therefore an inherent concern of women's spirituality and as a result, Goddess rituals and celebrations are closely related to natural cycles. Women's spirituality is also marked with the widespread interest in the metaphysical and the intuitive. Modern women feel as though they are guided by Goddess through Tarot, astrology, omens, dreams and things of the like.

Stone is encouraged by the creativity that flows from women in relation to Goddess reverence. She is energized by the thought that a new culture has been created. Goddess reclamation helps women feel more confident and courageous.

Unfortunately, a tragic element that has intruded into some factions of women's spirituality is the notion that white Europeans are more culturally and spiritually developed than other people. Stone finds disappointment in those women, who, although small in number, only recognize the Greek and Roman Goddesses and the

Celtic spiritual celebrations. Her original goal of recognizing and dissolving racism is still far from realized, but she is optimistic that it can be achieved.

The Goddess of the new millennium is a "global Goddess." She symbolizes an ancient and gathered wisdom of the world and an environmental consciousness. Stone envisions a "humane and life-nurturing future" as a result of women's spirituality and Goddess reclamation.

Preface

Preface Summary and Analysis

Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood is a comprehensive collection of Goddess legends and rituals from all over the world. The book is part history text, part anthropological record, and part anthology. It covers the tales from ancient civilizations, prehistoric tribes, and modern adaptations.

Stone states the advantages of positive role models. She feels that women are severely lacking in strong and positive images of other women. Stone cites Clara Colby's concerns that Judeo-Christian scriptures have had negative effects on women.

Stone suspects that many believe that women have always been portrayed as secondary to men. White male-oriented societies have perpetuated this attitude through the restriction of grade school curriculum all the way up to university course offerings. Cultures that view women as supreme deity are either ignored or referred to as an aside. Stone accuses the male-dominated major religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) of suppressing all things "religious" or "spiritual" in relation to positive images of women. Accounts of Goddess reverence are automatically labeled as mythology.

Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood is filled with proof that a large body of information exists on woman as deity, clergy and heroine. It is Stone's hope that this volume of work will provide role models of strong, determined, wise, courageous, powerful and adventurous women.



Introduction

Introduction Summary and Analysis

Cultures from around the world have stories of the creation of the earth, the heavens, the sun, and life. In each of these stories it is a Goddess that created, cared for, and even repaired the earth and/or life. The multitude of accounts of woman as deity are classified and dismissed as "mythology." Few people in western society are willing to accept the creation stories and accounts of ancient cultures as truly "religious" concepts.

Stone cites several definitions of "mythology" and "religion" in an effort to compare the two terms. She finds that aside from the usage of male terms and the use of uppercase and lowercase gs (for example, *god* and *God*), the primary difference is that "mythology is to be regarded as the accounts of 'others'" and "religion" provides the "doctrines we are to believe (as) religious truth." She draws this conclusion based on the use of the words "heathen" and "primitive" in the definitions of "mythology." Stone also finds that the definitions of "heathen" and "pagan" are "those other than Christian, Jew, or Mohammedan (Muslim)." Stone ponders the possibility that these three major religions are considered non-heathen because they are lacking in female deities. She asserts that religious beliefs of other cultures and times are valid and should also be considered "religious truth." Readers are asked to remove their "cultural blinders" and approach Stone's body of work with an open mind.

After fifteen years of research, Stone's fascination with her subject matter remains intact. She finds joy in revealing the various images of woman. Woman is a creator, a provider and a teacher. She is wise and courageous. She is every racial background, of every age, and of every temperament. No simple archetype or stereotype can encompass all the images and perceptions of women.

Evidence of Goddess reverence can be found during the initial period of writing development (3200 B.C.) and for at least 35 centuries after that. Prayers, descriptions of rituals, and scripture have been found written on tablets and papyri. This collection of actual written evidence disputes the mistaken belief that Goddess worship existed only in prehistoric times.

In writing the introduction for this book, Stone discovers that she has actually written another book, her first, *When God Was A Woman*. The first book focuses on an historical analysis of Goddess suppression in the Near East and Middle East. Upon her return to the original task of writing a collection of Goddess lore, Stone finds that she is faced with a major challenge. She is unsure of the format that her book should follow, as her information is vast and fragmented. Stone decides to reject a strictly academic presentation of the information because her studies are unquestionably subjective. She also vows to treat each culture and its religious ideas with respect and sanctity.



It is Stone's hope that in becoming familiar with the images of womanhood, a realization can be made as to why and how they were erased and/or degraded by male worshipping groups. Stone has aspirations that women will gather spiritual wisdom from these works. An expectant result of the growing spiritual wisdom is that nature will once again come to be regarded as sacred.



Chapter 1, A Gentle Omnipotence— China

Chapter 1, A Gentle Omnipotence—China Summary and Analysis

Ancient Chinese texts tell of a period known as The Era of The Great Purity. It is described in the *Chang Tzu* as a "time when all was innocent and the human relationship with nature was harmonious." The texts explain that humans destroyed their paradise by defacing the environment through mining and logging, hunting and fishing, and the use of fire. This period of unbalance is referred to as the Great Cosmic Struggle. Archeological evidence from the provinces along the Hwang Ho (Yellow River) suggests that the Great Cosmic Struggle had begun by at least 4000 B.C.

The image of the Goddess of ancient China takes on the characteristics of water. She is in constant motion, without a beginning or end. She is seen in the metaphor of the river water flowing around the boulder, rather than smashing against it. The water finds a way to continue on its course. It is also in this way that the water will eventually, over time, wear a boulder down to a pebble. The message to be taken from the accounts of the Chinese Goddesses is not that of passive acceptance of Nature, but rather the emphasis is on the study and observation of nature and the wisdom of finding new paths.



Chapter 2, Nu Kwa

Chapter 2, Nu Kwa Summary and Analysis

Tales of the Goddess Nu Kwa come from the people of the northern provinces of China, once known as Chi' and known today as Hopei and Shansi. She is often depicted as having a fish tail. The legend of Nu Kwa tells of how she carefully crafts the "race of the golden people" from the golden earth and thus, the highly revered Chinese ancestors are created. As Nu Kwa works, she tires of her tedious task and resorts to pulling a string through the mud, creating the rest of the Chinese people. She brings wind and water for the benefit of planting, and she fills the Chihli Po Hai Bay with fish for her people to eat.

The world is eventually filled with chaos. Earthquakes are abundant and the animals eat the people. The Great Mother Nu Kwa repairs the damage. The pillars that once supported the four corners of heaven are now replaced with the legs of the great turtle. She uses her mighty arms to smother the fires upon the earth. Nu Kwa then piles the ashes high to form a barricade against the raging waters. She repairs the order and rhythm to the patterns of the universe.

Mother Nu Kwa is able to rest once she sees that balance has been restored to all that she created. A time of peace and harmony now exists throughout her universe once again.

Chapter 3, Kuan Yin

Chapter 3, Kuan Yin Summary and Analysis

Kuan Yin is a Goddess still revered today in modern China. Some of the tales reflect a Buddhist influence. It is possible that she is an updated version of Nu Kwa with superimposed Buddhist beliefs. Kuan Yin is said to have reached ultimate enlightenment. She returns to the earth to protect and heal.

There is a tale of her return, when she lived as the youngest of three sisters. She does not wish to marry, like her sisters, and asks to go to temple. Her angry father arranges for the temple women to treat her cruelly and burden her with many strenuous tasks. Kuan Yin calls upon the help of animal friends. Kuan Yin's father, angered by her ability to complete all her given tasks, burns the temple down. Kuan Yin smothers the fire with her hands, which only increases her father's anger. He orders that she should be beheaded. The sword of the headsman breaks upon her neck, so he is forced to choke her with his bare hands. Kuan Yin's lifeless body is tied to the back of a tiger and released into the jungle. Kuan Yin enters into the Land of the Dead and despite her own fear, she sings to comfort the suffering and pain of the souls within. The King of the Dead is furious that the souls are no longer suffering and he banishes Kuan Yin from his kingdom. She returns to her body and is said to now live in the Northeastern Sea where she continues listening for cries of help.



Chapter 4, Hsi Ho

Chapter 4, Hsi Ho Summary and Analysis

References to Hsi Ho are scarce. The *Shan Hai Ching* and *Huai Nan Tzu* of the Han period contain writings about the Goddess Hsi Ho.

A short free verse poem tells of the Mother bathing her children, the ten suns. She chooses a different sun each day and bathes it in the sweet waters of the Kan Yuan Gulf. She then places the sun in the branches of the Fu Sang Tree. From the branches of the tree the sun makes its trip across the heavens.



Chapter 5, Tien Hou

Chapter 5, Tien Hou Summary and Analysis

The story of the mortal girl Tien Hou can still be heard around the island of Meichow Tao. Possessing supernatural abilities and powers, she is known as The Protector of the Sea. The existence of shrines and statues of Tien Hou suggest that she was a religious image of the ancient Chinese.

Tien Hou has four brothers and the young girl longs to join her father and brothers on their fishing adventures. There comes a day when her father and brothers have been away for two weeks. Tien Hou is sorting reeds for a basket when she suddenly feels a great pain in her head, gasps for air, and falls to the ground. Tien Hou's mother tends her daughter, asking her to hear her voice and return. Tien Hou awakens and claims, "I should have stayed just a moment longer." When the fishing boats return the father and brothers tell of how their boat was overcome in a violent storm, and they were tossed into the water. They tell of how Tien Hou appeared and pulled them from the water. They also report that Tien Hou disappeared before the fourth brother could be rescued. Tien Hou admits that she was there and it was the sound of her mother's distraught voice that pulled her away from the rescue of her brother. Eventually Tien Hou again enters into another coma. Her family now knows that she is watching over the ships at sea so they do not make an attempt to rouse her.



Chapter 6, Mother Nature (Tao)

Chapter 6, Mother Nature (Tao) Summary and Analysis

Tao is most often translated as "The Way" or "The Path." It is not usually associated with the concept of Goddesses. Stone includes the mention of Tao because the *Tao Teh Ching* suggests that the way to best understand Tao is to understand and follow the ways of Mother Nature. Mother Nature is the source of all things—all that was, is, and will be.

Mother Nature provides insight into the female principle of yin. Many believe that yin implies passivity. Yin is a different type of activity than the more aggressive energy of yang—Yin is a "constant flowing."



Chapter 7, Gum Lin and Loy Yi Lung

Chapter 7, Gum Lin and Loy Yi Lung Summary and Analysis

The story of the mortal girl, Gum Lin, and the dragon's daughter, Loy Yi Lung, is still told in China today. It is through Gum Lin's determination and selflessness that her people are saved.

The land is suffering from a terrible drought. Gum Lin must travel farther and farther in an effort to find bamboo for the mats she sells to help feed her family. One day she walks into a deep forest in the mountains and finds thickets of bamboo along the edge of beautiful lake. She returns to her village with her arms full of bamboo but is consumed that night with thoughts of how she might get the water from the mountains to the thirsty village. The next morning she takes her shovel and pickaxe to the lake, intending to dig a spout on the edge of the reservoir. As Gum Lin searches the banks of the lake for just the right spot to dig she finds a stone gate. She is tirelessly pulling on the unrelenting gate when a grey swan tells her that she must first find the key. As Gum Lin wanders into the woods to think about her puzzling situation, three birds inform her that she needs to find the daughter of the dragon. Just at that moment, a peacock shakes its tail and in the rustles of the feathers Gum Lin hears instructions on how to find the dragon's daughter.

Gum Lin returns to the lake's edge and sings every song she knows, as per the peacock's instructions. It is the sad song of her people's hardships that finally summons Loy Yi Lung, the dragon's daughter. Loy Yi Lung formulates a plan for how they might steal the key from her father's cave. Loy Yi Lung and Gum Lin sing together, luring the dragon to the entrance of his cave. Loy Yi Lung continues the song while Gum Lin slips into the cave undetected. Inside the cave, a glorious treasure awaits her—Gum Lin momentarily thinks to stuff her pockets full of gold and gems, but then rejects the idea as she continues her search for the key. Just as Gum Lin decides to leave the riches and continue the search for the key that will save her village, it appears on a ledge near her shoulder. With the key safe in her pocket, Gum Lin and Loy Yi Lung swim back to the water's edge. Gum Lin unlocks the stone gate and an endless supply of water "quenches the thirst of the land."

As the water flows, a new river is created along the side of Gum Lin's house. Loy Yi Lung makes her home there in the new river and the two spend their days visiting on the river's bank and singing.



Chapter 8, Mighty in Magic...and Wales

Chapter 8, Mighty in Magic...and Wales Summary and Analysis

The Celtic people once inhabited a vast geographic area. Their broad influence can be seen in many Indo-European cities. Written accounts of Goddesses do not appear until the period of their arrival in their current homelands. It is for this reason that the nature of the Celtic Goddesses is drawn primarily from Irish, Scottish and Welsh sources.

The Celtic Goddesses are often connected to water and horses, with each Goddess usually associated with a specific body of water. Both water and horses were important to the Celtic people because they supplied transportation and mobility. Another trait common to the Celtic Goddesses is their ability to assume many forms.

Chapter 9, Danu

Chapter 9, Danu Summary and Analysis

Danu is the most ancient Celtic Goddess, with written accounts appearing around 1000 A.D. She is associated with the River Danube and is known by many names: Donau, Dunav, Don, Danube, Mother of the Tuatha de Danaan (tribe of Danu), and Mother of all Celtic peoples. The Celtic people have spoken of her from the time they were known as Gauls until they came to rest in Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

It was Danu that created the Celtic people, giving them nourishment and life. Midsummer's Eve (the summer solstice) is the holiest of Danu's holy days. On this day worshippers pray for abundance and bless the herds and crops.



Chapter 10, The Morrigan

Chapter 10, The Morrigan Summary and Analysis

The Morrigan is an extremely aggressive Goddess who plays a major role in the Irish epic *Tain Bo Cualgne*. As with several of the Celtic Goddesses, the Morrigan has a triple nature, also appearing as Badb and Macha. Some compare her three forms to the three phases of the moon while others claim that she is the Divine Matronae (the Three Mothers). Some explain that the Holy Trinity was once the Daughter, the Mother, and the Grandmother in which the Morrigan was the Maiden, Matron, and Crone.

The Morrigan changes shape and form frequently. She speaks in the form of poetry and prophecies and appears as Badb in the form of a raven. She flies across battlefields, appearing only to those who are about to die. As the Mighty Queen, she gave birth to a son, Mecha, who had three serpents in his three hearts.

There is a tale of the Morrigan's wrath against a young man who angered her. Odras mates his cow with her sacred bull. The Morrigan picks up the cow and bull and carries them to the cave at Cruachan where Odras tries to catch the Morrigan, but she is too fast. He pauses in the woods to rest; the Morrigan later comes upon the sleeping Odras and casts a spell upon him. She changes him into a pond and his spirit remains in the water to this day.

Another tale tells of a warrior that enraged the Morrigan. Cu Chulainn, a warrior of Ulster, is bathing in a river when the Morrigan first sees him. She is enamored with him and wishes to lay with him. Cu Chulainn refuses her love claiming that he is too tired from battle. The Morrigan offers her help to the warrior in battle, so that he might have the energy to join her in bed. Cu Chulainn refuses her again, disdainful of the very thought that a woman could possibly help in battle. The Morrigan now considers him an enemy.

One morning The Morrigan finds Cu Chulainn still asleep. She startles him, causing him to tumble from bed naked and confused. He rushes to his wagon to head for battle, only to find that he does not know where he should go. Adding to his confusion, a strange horse and wagon approaches. A woman is riding in the wagon and a footman accompanies her. Not realizing that the woman is the Morrigan, Cu Chulainn asks for her name and purpose. His questions are met with riddles that only confuse him more. The footman, horse and wagon disappear leaving only the Morrigan who turns into a large black bird and she flies away laughing.

The Morrigan is not satisfied with simply making Cu Chulainn look a fool. The next time he is in battle, she takes the form of a cow and leads 50 white cows across the battlefield. The confusion gives the opposing troops the advantage over Cu Chulainn's men. The Morrigan then turns into an eel and twists herself around the arms and legs of Cu Chulainn. Just as he is about to free himself from the eel, the Morrigan turns into a



wolf, biting into the warrior's arms. The battle continues into the night until finally the Morrigan leaves Cu Chulainn on the battlefield.

The fight has left the Morrigan wounded. She knows that she can be healed if she receives three blessings from the one who has wounded her. The Morrigan takes the form of an old woman with a milking pail. She waits alongside the road for the wounded Cu Chulainn to return home. When he comes along, she offers the tired and thirsty warrior a cup of milk. Cu Chulainn blesses her for her kindness. The Morrigan offers him two more cups of milk and receives two more blessings in turn. Having received her three blessings, the Morrigan is healed. She spreads her "raven wings" and foretells a grim future for Cu Chulainn before she flies away.



Chapter 11, Macha

Chapter 11, Macha Summary and Analysis

Macha, which means "mighty," often appears as one of the three aspects of the Morrigan. She seems to appear as the equine aspect of the Morrigan's imagery. However, there are several accounts where Macha appears as a separate deity. It is said that she used her ax to clear the land for cattle to graze and crops to be sown.

There is a time when two evil and cruel brothers named Cimbaeth and Dithorba rule the land. Macha drives the brothers from the land and rules for seven years until the five sons of Dithorba challenge her claim to the throne.

Macha learns that the five sons have made camp in the forest nearby. She disguises herself as a leper and asks for warmth from the sons' campfire. They allow her to stay on the outskirts of their camp. The youngest son plots to take her into the woods and have his way with her. He tries to rape her but soon finds himself tied to a tree and left alone in the forest. Macha returns to the fire and explains that he must have felt shame from "lying with a leper." The scenario is repeated with each of the sons. Macha uses her magic to turn them into faithful servants and the five sons build the temple of Emain Macha and serve her there for the rest of their lives.

Many years later, Macha takes the form of a peasant woman. While in the forest, she discovers the home of a widower named Crunnchu. He takes her as his wife. The two live in bliss and Macha soon becomes pregnant. One day, Crunnchu spots Macha running through the woods so fast that it seems her feet never touch the ground. He boasts to the men in Ulster that his pregnant wife could outrun the king's horses. The men threaten Crunnchu's life and demand proof. Crunnchu insists that Macha must save his life by racing the king's horses. Macha begs that he wait until after the birth, for the baby's life and hers could be endangered, but Crunnchu orders her to go. The crowd at Ulster insists upon the race. They too, do not care that the lives of mother and child are at risk. Macha takes her place near the anxious horses. She takes off so quickly that it seems she almost flies over the horses' heads. She calmly crosses the finish line before the horses have passed the halfway mark and there at the finish line, Macha swiftly gives birth to twins. She takes each infant up under her arms and as she leaves she places a curse on the people of Ulster so that they "may suffer misery and pain equal to that of childbirth for 81 generations."



Chapter 12, Cerridwen

Chapter 12, Cerridwen Summary and Analysis

Most references to Cerridwen are found in the sixteenth-century works of Welsh Elis Gruffydd. The name Cerridwen has been translated both as "Cauldron of Wisdom" and "Fortress of Wisdom." Gruffydd refers to her as a witch. She is said to possess "great wisdom, prophetic foresight, and magical shape shifting abilities."

Cerridwen gives birth to a black son, Morfran. She worries that her son will not have a life of ease because there are those who call him Afagddu, saying that he is ugly because of his. She decides to give her son a gift of her magical powers. She prepares Aven, the Cauldron of the Deep, to make three drops of a liquid that will provide foresight and magical powers. Cerridwen arranges for a blind man to tend to the flames of the fire and she asks a young man named Gwion to stir the pot. Nine women also tend to the pot, breathing upon the cauldron as it boils. The elixir boils for a year and a day. The fatigued Cerridwen places Morfran near the cauldron and goes for a rest in the woods. While Cerridwen sleeps, Gwion pushes Morfran to the side and steals the three drops. The cauldron cracks, awakening Cerridwen.

Cerridwen is furious and wishes to punish Gwion, but he has changed into a rabbit and hops away. Cerridwen quickly changes into a greyhound and pursues him. Gwion changes into a fish just as he is about to be caught, slipping into the river, and Cerridwen follows close behind as an otter. The pair soon turns into a bird and hawk. Gwion, fearing that Cerridwen the hawk is closing in on him, turns into a grain of wheat and falls into a wheat pile. Cerridwen watches as the grain of Gwion falls to the pile. She turns into a hen and pecks at the grains until she finds him and eats him. She then becomes pregnant with Gwion. For nine months, as she carries the child, Cerridwen swears that she will destroy the infant when he is born. She is unable to strangle the child when he is born and instead places him in a sack and throws him into the "raging waters."



Chapter 13, Morgan le Fay and The Lady of the Lake

Chapter 13, Morgan le Fay and The Lady of the Lake Summary and Analysis

Morgan le Fay and the Lady of the Lake are usually described as two separate figures. Stone believes that the two may both be derived from a single, earlier, concept of the Morrigan. This idea is not so unique, as it is already thought that the image of Morgan le Fay is derived from earlier Celtic beliefs in the Morrigan. It is speculated that Morgan le Fay is also the same as the Faerie Queen, Fata Morgana and the Goddess Fortuna. Stone asks, "Are not Fata, Fay, and Faerie simply other ways of saying Fate?"

Some claim that Morgan le Fay is King Arthur's sister, and that she is the one who took his body to her mystic island of Avalon. It is known that the Lady of the Lake gave the sword Excalibur to Arthur, yet they also claim that it was Morgan who forged the sword in Avalon. Tales tell of Arthur returning the sword to the Lady of the Lake just before his death. Many stories tell of how the Lady of the Lake tricked Merlin into teaching her his magic. Still other stories say it was Fata Morgana that he taught.



Chapter 14, Bridget

Chapter 14, Bridget Summary and Analysis

The Christianizing of early Celtic deities can best be learned from accounts of the Goddess of the Brigantes. Bridget was canonized as a Christian saint said to have been the midwife to the Virgin Mary. Further evidence points to the fire at Bridget's shrine in Kildare, which was originally tended by priestesses, and later by Catholic sisters. Bridget is known as the Great One, the Mother, the Mighty, Brigantia, Briginda and Brigidu.

It is said that Bridget was born at sunrise and that a flame stretched from the top of her head into the heavens, signaling the birth of a holy baby. Nine priestesses tend to Bridget's flame and spread her wisdom among the people. The priestesses also teach the women of the village about healing herbs and springs, which can cure impotence and leprosy. It is Bridget who teaches the blacksmith and the poet their arts.

There is a separate tale of a man, dying of leprosy, who asks Bridget that he might own a cow before dying. Instead, Bridget heals the man's body with the waters of a healing well. Upon hearing this story, two more lepers come to Bridget for help. She instructs one man to bathe the other as he watches the leprosy wash away. The healed man is asked to do the same for his still leprous friend, but refuses. Immediately, the healed man becomes sick again and the leprous man is cured.



Chapter 15, Cailleach Bheur

Chapter 15, Cailleach Bheur Summary and Analysis

Accounts of Cailleach Bheur are primarily found in Ireland, although they are closely associated with the figure Mala Liath (Grey Mare) in Scotland. Cailleach is translated as hag, crone, or wise old woman. She is referred to as the Daughter of the Moon.

Cailleach Bheur throws thunderbolts and runs with wild animals. She tends to the herds of deer and flies in the form of an eagle or black cormorant. Cailleach Bheur carries a wand that brings frost and snow. Many try to steal her powers, but none have succeeded.

There is a tale of three brothers who meet Cailleach Bheur disguised as an old beggar woman. She asks for food and a moment of rest by their fire. The two oldest boys ignore and refuse her, respectively. The youngest brother offers her the rest of his meat and shares his warm blankets with her. Cailleach blesses him for the rest of his life.

A less fortunate man discovers Cailleach in the form of wild boar. He hunts her all day long unsuccessfully. Angered at his persistence, she causes a thorn of poison to prick and kill him.



Chapter 16, Maeve (Medb)

Chapter 16, Maeve (Medb) Summary and Analysis

The image of Maeve is that of a mighty queen. She is an unusual combination of Faerie Queen and a leader of troops. Some Celtic tales say that she is the Queen of Faerie, the magical Mab, and the Queen of Elfhome. Others say that she was a mortal queen of the county Connacht and upon her shoulders perched two golden sacred birds. The magic voices of the birds whisper wisdom into her ears.

Maeve is known to have taken many husbands and lovers. It is said that her words can still be heard in Ireland:

If I married a selfish man

our union would be wrong

because I am so full of grace and giving.

It would be wrong if I were the more generous,

yet I would not want to take more than I offered.

I would not want a timid man

for I must admit that I thrive upon action

and believe that any couple must be equal in spirit.

It would be wrong if I married a jealous man

for never have I been with one man

without another waiting patiently in his shadow.

Chapter 17, Rhiannon

Chapter 17, Rhiannon Summary and Analysis

Rhiannon is known among the Welsh as Rigantona, Regina and the Great Queen Goddess. She is seen riding a white horse and carrying a magical bag of abundance. She is the ancient Celtic trinity of Woman, Mare, and Colt. She is celebrated at a yearly feast for the Winter Solstice.

Some say that her home is on the island of the Sidhe folk where the souls of the dead reside. She lives with her three sacred birds perched upon her shoulders. Their song lulls the living to death, awakens the dead and heals all sadness and pain. Many try to steal the magic birds. One such attempt is made by Buddaden, a man who intends to capture the birds, but eats their magic eggs instead. Feathers begin to sprout all over Buddaden's body. Rhiannon burst into laughter at the ridiculous sight of the feathered Buddaden. Embarrassed, Buddaden flees from the island.

Rhiannon enjoys taking the form of animals and playing in the trees and meadows. One day she takes the form of a rabbit, but is soon hunted. A young man named Cian rescues Rhiannon as rabbit from the hunter. She rewards Cian by inviting him to live on the island of the Sidhe. Rhiannon and Cian live happily on the island for many months until one day when Cian tries to rape her. The gentle Rhiannon is filled with rage at the very thought of the betrayal. She changes into a large horse and stomps on Cian. His thighbone splinters and he spends the rest of his life limping in pain.



Chapter 18, The Oneness...Central and South America

Chapter 18, The Oneness...Central and South America Summary and Analysis

The Native Americans of both North and South America originally came from northern Asia. It is thought by some that Mongolian peoples may have crossed the Bering Strait into Alaska as early as 40,000 B.C. Archaeological and anthropological evidence suggests that some of these groups of people reached the southernmost tip of South America somewhere between 11,000 B.C. and 6000 B.C. Studies show that these groups were not only hunters and gatherers, but they also had an understanding of agricultural methods. Some experts believe that there was some contact between the people of South and Central America and Polynesian groups. While experts debate this belief, Stone offers the similarities in Goddesses in each of the cultures as proof of contact.

Only fragments of writing exist from the ancient civilizations of South America, and much of it is not yet deciphered. Biased accounts of the people of Mexico and Guatemala written by Catholic friars do exist. Images of Goddesses are seen at archaeological sites that date back to 2000 B.C. The Goddesses of Mexico, South America, and Brazil symbolize maize, rain, the moon, and volcanoes. They celebrate the passage from girlhood to womanhood.



Chapter 19, Mu Olokukurtilisop

Chapter 19, Mu Olokukurtilisop Summary and Analysis

Mu, Giant Blue Butterfly Lady, protects the women of the Cuna tribe of Panama. The Cuna people say that it is Mu Olokukurtilisop that created all that exists. She gives birth to the sun, mates with it and creates the moon. She makes love to the moon to create the stars. Mu gives birth to all plants and animals by making love with the stars.

The Cuna people return their dead to the caves of Tarcarcuna where they first made their homes. They view the caves as Mother Mu's womb from whence all people came. A girl entering menarche is initiated through a ceremony and the painting of her face with red juice of the saptur fruit. The Cuna people say that the red juice is the menstrual blood of Mu. The girl about to enter womanhood is taken to the sacred hut of the Inna, the shrine of female puberty. The young girl lies on the ground so that she is one with the earth, as older women toss soil on her. The women sit around her on benches, smoking incense and forming the Ring of Protection. The soil is removed and the girl's face is painted while the women chant and dance their blessings. A saptur tree is cut and presented to the girl as a gift. The women study the cross-grain of the tree and read each line foretelling the events to come in the new woman's life. The new woman is presented with a secret Cuna name that she never speaks to another person for her entire life.



Chapter 20, Akewa

Chapter 20, Akewa Summary and Analysis

The Toba people of Argentina present an account of how women arrived on earth. They say that women descended from the heavens on a long rope. The women search for roots and new plants that they might take back to their home in the heavens. The men at this time are still animals, covered in fur and walking on four legs. The male animals see the rope from the heavens and cut it with their sharp teeth, preventing the women from returning to their home. The women live alongside the male animals, eventually mating with them and creating the Toba race of people.

The one woman to remain in heaven is Akewa, the sun. Akewa grows young and old, moving quickly and slowly, respectively. The days grow shorter or longer as a result of her varied pace. The moon is an old pot-bellied man. There is a jaguar that also lives in the heavens and stalks Akewa and the fat moon. Because he is so fat, the moon is often caught by the jaguar, and has bites taken out of him. Akewa is seldom caught because she fights with metal weapons. It is only when she hides herself from the sky that the Toba people fear that the jaguar has eaten her.



Chapter 21, Huitaca

Chapter 21, Huitaca Summary and Analysis

Huitaca is the Moon Goddess of the Chibcha people from Colombia. A free-verse poem tells of Huitaca's moonlight, leading the people to drinking and making love. Bochica, a teacher of spinning and weaving, comes and warns that the pleasures of the people are wrong and immoral. Just as the people are about to listen to the joyless teachings of Bochica, Huitaca appears and taunts him and angers him. The people laugh at this and call her Chie and Jubchas Guaya, Mother of Joy. They continue to laugh and dance around the moon.



Chapter 22, Coatlicue

Chapter 22, Coatlicue Summary and Analysis

Coatlicue is the Mother of all Aztec deities. She is the creator of all life to the ancient people of Mexico. Coatlicue hides herself in a cloud on a mountaintop in Aztlan. She brings forth the moon, sun and the stars. She gives and takes life. Upon dying, the Aztecs return to her lava altar where they are melted to rejoin her. Coatlicue is able to look into her obsidian mirrors to reveal the future.

Coatlicue becomes pregnant with her son, the warlike Huitzilpochtli, also known as Tezcatlipoca. Once born, Huitzilpochtli murders Coatlicue's other children—the stars in the heavens. Coatlicue grieves the most for her fairest daughter, Coyolxauqui. She recovers her daughter's head and sets it in a place of honor, which in turn lights the night sky.

It is said that one daughter, Xochiquetzal, survived. It is she who teaches the Aztecs about spinning, weaving, painting, carving and music. Xochiquetzal also teaches of the goodness of a woman's sensuality. She teaches the cycle of life and of marigolds. She is often called the Obsidian Butterfly and holds a role as the Ruler of the Land of the Dead.

One more daughter is born to Coatlicue. This daughter, Malinalxoch, is able to tame even the wildest animals. Huitzilpochtli is jealous of his sister's powers and speaks out against her as he leads Aztec troops to conquer the villages of Mexico.

Many temples honor Coatlicue. It is her most sacred temple on the hill of Tepeyac that has been converted to a Catholic shrine to the Virgin Mary. Spanish priests witness pilgrims bringing round corn cakes to the temple on the twelfth of December and they name it as the shrine of the Black Madonna.



Chapter 23, Chicomecoatl

Chapter 23, Chicomecoatl Summary and Analysis

A celebration of the corn harvest honors Chicomecoatl, the Great Corn Mother. Three young girls are chosen as corn maidens: the youngest represents the baby corn sprouts, the middle girl represents the harvest at its midway point, and the oldest represents the day when the corn waves highest in the fields. Seven ears of corn are presented to Chicomecoatl so that she may bless them. The seven ears are stored and used to plant the next year's harvest. It is said that the corn is Chicomecoatl's son, Cinteotl, or Xipe Totec.

Just as Chicomecoatl watches over the harvest, she also watches over the women who have died in childbirth. These women are seen as heroes, having given their life for another life.



Chapter 24, Teteu Innan

Chapter 24, Teteu Innan Summary and Analysis

The accounts of Teteu Innan are very sparse. She is portrayed as the Goddess of childbirth, healing and prophesy. She is the Matron Spirit of all Midwives giving life to the wombs of the women who desire children. Teteu Innan heals the sick and allows glimpses into the future that she will bring by arranging the patterns of the tossed kernels of corn.



Chapter 25, Chalchihuilicue

Chapter 25, Chalchihuilicue Summary and Analysis

Chalchihuilicue is the Mistress of the rains and waters. She rules the Aztecs in the time of the Fourth Sun. The time comes when she sees too much wrongdoing and builds a bridge to the time of the Fifth Sun and selects the people that she will save. She then sends constant rains to flood the land and destroy all those that she rejected.

Chapter 26, Bachue

Chapter 26, Bachue Summary and Analysis

Bachue is a Chibcha Divine Ancestress. She emerges from a lake near the city of Tunja in Colombia. At Bachue's side is her three-year old son. She raises him to manhood in a nearby forest and takes him as her husband. Together they bring forth all who live along the great river and on the mountainsides. Bachue teaches the people peace and order. Once she sees that "her great family" can care for themselves, Bachue and her son/husband take on the forms of water serpents and slither back home into their lake.



Chapter 27, Mayuel

Chapter 27, Mayuel Summary and Analysis

Mayuel is an Aztec Goddess depicted as having four hundred breasts and having given birth to the four hundred stars. She is also known as the Goddess of Mescal, the intoxicating liquid of the maguey (metl) plant. Today, Mescal is better known as Tequila. It is thought that Mayuel nursed the stars with her breasts filled with Mescal. It is also said that "the first two people on the earth were raised suckling on the magical juice."

One story tells of how Mayuel discovers Mescal. In the time that Mayuel is a mortal woman, she is exhausted from a long day in the fields. She is fetching some water as her last chore of the day and notices a mouse chewing on a maguey plant. The mouse begins to dance. Mayuel wonders if it is the sap from the plant that caused the mouse to dance and so she collects the liquid in her water pot. As she walks home, Mayuel tastes the liquid. She forgets about her fatigue and finds herself in the mood to skip and sing. She shares the wonderful juice with her family and the house is soon filled with joy and laughter.

Even now that Mayuel has finished her time on earth, she appears in visions to those who have enjoyed the "magical beverage." Mescal is sipped to ease the pains during childbirth. It is also used at sacred celebrations so that the drinkers may better understand the workings of the universe.



Chapter 28, Ix Chel

Chapter 28, Ix Chel Summary and Analysis

The Mayans know Ix Chel as the moon. She is the Mother of all deities. She eases childbirth and has knowledge of healing. It is Ix Chel that causes the menstrual flow of women every month. She is known to have flooded the earth so that it could be remade. She is the Eagle Woman, using eagles as the messengers of her "moon essence."

Ix Chel watches from the heavens as a spider carefully spins a web and creates a daughter for her. Ix Chebel Yax later teaches the women of the earth how to spin and weave. She also teaches them how to dye their cotton.

At the beginning of time, the sun and the moon fill the sky with light, both equal in their brightness. The sun becomes enamored of the moon and wishes to court her. It is necessary to elude the moon's jealous grandfather, so the sun takes the form of a hummingbird. The moon's grandfather wounds the hummingbird with a clay pellet. The moon cares for the bird and runs away with him, but the grandfather chases the pair and orders a lightning bolt to be thrown at them by Chac, the controller of storms. The lightning bolt strikes Ix Chel and kills her. Heavenly dragonflies mourn her death and spend thirteen days reviving her through the use of 13 hollow logs. On the thirteenth night, 12 logs split open, spilling out the great snakes of heaven. The thirteenth log splits open and a renewed Ix Chel emerges.

The sun and moon quickly marry and live side by side in the heavens. Unfortunately, their bliss does not last long for the sun's brother, Chac Noh Ek (Venus), is always visiting. The sun accuses Ix Chel of cheating on him with his brother and tosses her to the earth. A vulture finds the moon and offers a ride to the mountain peaks where he lives. There, Ix Chel takes the Vulture King as her lover. The sun sees this and his jealousy grows even hotter. He hides in a deer carcass and rides on the wings of a vulture to where the moon is. He apologizes and Ix Chel agrees to return to the heavens with her husband. However, it isn't long before he grows jealous again. He accuses the moon of cheating with his brother again, as well as with Zinaan Ek (Scorpio) and Tzab (The Pleiades). The sun beats his wife with the hope that she will be so badly scarred that no one could possibly desire her. Ix Chel's defiance eventually grows so strong that she flies off into the night, where she still remains to this day, disappearing when her husband appears. She provides guidance to the women of Cozumel Island, setting the example that a woman must be free to come and go as she pleases.



Chapter 29, Iamanja

Chapter 29, Iamanja Summary and Analysis

A Brazilian poem about Iamanja, the Goddess of the Sea, tells about the ritual that honors her. On the eve of the Summer Solstice, the people gather on the beaches of Brazil. They release sacred boats filled with flowers and prayers for Iamanja, Holy Queen Sea. Floating logs are set on fire to light the mounds of flowers upon the boats.



Chapter 30, And from Chaos...Semites...and Arabia

Chapter 30, And from Chaos...Semites...and Arabia Summary and Analysis

The accounts of Goddess reverence in this section come from a vast supply of translations of Semitic tablets and texts. This is some of the earliest written material, coming primarily from the area known as The Levant (Lebanon, Israel, and Syria) and from ancient Mesopotamia (northern and central Iraq). The material supporting Goddess worship in these areas is based on records of archaeological excavations.



Chapter 31, Mami Aruru

Chapter 31, Mami Aruru Summary and Analysis

The two Akkadian names *Mami* and *Aruru* are used interchangeably to refer to the Creator of Life, the Divine Mother of All. The ancient mother creates life by pinching off 14 pieces of clay and laying a brick between them. She creates seven women and places them to the left, then creates seven men and places them to the right. The people are then placed upon the earth.



Chapter 32, Ishtar

Chapter 32, Ishtar Summary and Analysis

The most popular Goddess among the Semites of northern and central Mesopotamia is Ishtar. She is Queen of Heaven, descended from Venus. She is known to other people by different names: Mother of Deities, Lioness of the Igigi, Producer of Life, Ruler of the Heavens, and Lady of Battle and Victory. The Sumerian Goddess Inanna is thought to be one and the same with Ishtar. Many images of Ishtar also exist: as a horned holy cow in Egypt; carrying a bow and arrow; wearing a tiara upon her head; sitting upon her lion throne; and riding upon the back of a large bird.

Ancient carvings paying homage to the holy Ishtar can be found throughout the Near East. Prayers to Ishtar can also be found inscribed on stone and clay. Rituals for Ishtar involve the temple priestesses taking lovers and men castrating themselves to serve as eunuch attendants. On the Day of the Sheepfolds, the twenty-eighth day of the month of Tammuz, a vulva made of lapis lazuli and an eight-pointed gold star are placed upon Ishtar's altar.

Ishtar's shepherd son Tammuz is also her lover. She chooses him for the sacred marriage rites celebrated during the holy days of the Akitu festival. Tammuz is taken from Ishtar by death and she mourns. Each year the priestesses select a new Tammuz to celebrate the marriage rites and to mourn his death. Gilgamesh, an invader, plans to take part in the ritual one year so that he might become king. As Ishtar offers her bed to him, Gilgamesh fears for his life. He kills Ishtar's bull of heaven and leads his troops in an attack on Ishtar's people. The ritual is changed from that year on. Kings may proclaim themselves as rulers and they must not meet their death at the end of a year. Instead, the kings must show humility by striking their own faces with a cord of seven knots.

Chapter 33, Atargatis

Chapter 33, Atargatis Summary and Analysis

Atargatis, Goddess of the Sea, climbs from the Mediterranean Sea with her infant daughter, Shammuramat. Atargatis is depicted with a fish tail, yet her daughter walks upon two feet. Atargatis leaves her daughter in the care of tender doves and returns to the sea. Shammuramat creates a shrine to her mother at Ascalon to house the doves of prophesy. Shammuramat then moves east to build the city of Ninevah.



Chapter 34, Ashtart (Astarte, Ashtoreth)

Chapter 34, Ashtart (Astarte, Ashtoreth) Summary and Analysis

There are many connections between Ashtart and Ishtar. For example, both are known as the Queen of Heaven. In fact, they are quite possibly the same Goddess. There are also those who believe that Ashtart is the same as the Egyptian Goddess Isis, and still others believe that she is the Greek Aphrodite. The Byblians tell of how Ashtart came to earth as a fiery falling star. They build her most sacred shrine at Aphaca, the site where she landed. Pilgrims toss gold and jewels into the water at Aphaca, saying that the site is "doubly sanctified." They believe that Ashtart's son/lover died there. Pilgrims also travel to Byblos to visit the ancient stone that contains the souls of all people. The stone is said to heal as well as reveal the future. Rituals for Ashtart are similar to Ishtar's in that priestesses take lovers, and men become eunuchs.

Chapter 35, Tiamat

Chapter 35, Tiamat Summary and Analysis

Tiamat is the Mesopotamian Mother of all Mothers—she gives birth to all. Tiamat is the first owner of the Tablets of Destiny and is also said to have been known by other names: Nammu, Asherah, Atargatis, Nuneit—Mother Goddess Sea.

The Gods Anu and Enki are sent to overthrow Tiamat because her omnipotence is seen as a challenge to some. The two fail at their task. In Babylon, Marduk wishes to dispose of The Mother. He successfully murders Tiamat and takes over the throne of heaven.



Chapter 36, Asherah

Chapter 36, Asherah Summary and Analysis

Asherah is linked to the Goddesses Ishtar, Ashtart and Atargatis. She is the Highest Queen, the Holy Mother. She is known to have given birth to the Seventy Deities of Heaven. She teaches her people about carpentry and bricklaying. Some claim that she is married to Thor El and that he is said to have created creatures. The ashera tree is wrapped with bands of mourning for her son/lover at her altars. The *Bible* makes reference to this tree as the Asherah Pole, demanding its demolition.



Chapter 37, Anat

Chapter 37, Anat Summary and Analysis

Accounts of Anat come from northern Canaan and appear to have developed as a culmination of the many ethnic groups living in the coastal port of Ugarit. Anat is called many names, including Mistress of the Lofty Heavens, Ruler of Dominion, Controller of Royalty, and Mother of All Nations. She is said to be the same as Anahita of the Iranians, Anait of the Anatolians, Anatu of the Sumerians, and Athena of the Greeks. She is also said to be one with the Mother of Egypt.

There are some scholars who claim that Anat is the daughter of Asherah. Stone disputes this by pointing out that accounts of Asherah's daughter indicate her name is Rahmai. Stone also points out that Anat pleaded for a temple for her brother, Baal. It is Asherah who rejoices when Baal is murdered by Mot.

So fierce are Anat's pleas for Baal's temple that Thor El, the leader of the deities, hides from her in fear and apprehension. It is Anat who is strong enough to punish Mot, yet, she shows gentleness as she mourns her brother. Soon after Anat's battle with Mot, Baal is reborn.

Anat is depicted as fierce and strong, yet she is also compassionate. A story is told of Aqhat and his bow. Anat wants the bow and offers to pay for it with silver and gold but Aqhat questions a woman's ability to even use a bow, which angers Anat. She arranges for her assistant, Yatpan, to take the shape of an eagle and snatch the bow from Aqhat. Unfortunately, the great eagle's wings strike Aqhat and he dies. Anat feels sorrow for the accident and is reluctant to use the bow and elects to snap it in two as a symbol of her mourning.



Chapter 38, Allat, Al Uzza, and Manat

Chapter 38, Allat, Al Uzza, and Manat Summary and Analysis

Allat, Al Uzza and Manat are known in Arabia as the holy three. Allat is the primary Goddess of the Arabians, called upon as Mother. Al Uzza's light is seen as the Morning and Evening Star. She is associated with the planet Venus and often described as the star Sirius. Al Uzza is The Mighty One of Mecca. It is her strength that radiates from the holy stones of Ashtart at Byblos and of Kybele at Pessinus. Manat decides fortunes and speaks of destiny, as well as when it is one's time to die.

Chapter 39, Hokhma

Chapter 39, Hokhma Summary and Analysis

Hokhma is the Hebrew word for wisdom. The account of Hokhma (Wisdom) is from a text that was removed from the Bible. Wisdom is personified as female. The virtues of loving and knowing Wisdom are extolled in this text. Wisdom knows all. She does not make herself known to the spiteful. She teaches the knowledge of all there is to know in the world. She is a mirror of the active power of God, but she also decides what God will do. Wisdom sits by the throne of God, yet they also say that she is the Holy Spirit.



Chapter 40, Lilith

Chapter 40, Lilith Summary and Analysis

Lilith appears in many Sumerian tablets. As are many Goddesses of the Near East, she is known by other names. Lilith is depicted as the hand of the Goddess Inanna, bringing the men of the field into the temple at Erech. One version of Lilith shows her living in a huluppu tree that is cut down by Gilgamesh. It is thought that Lilith may be derived from the ancient Ninlil, a harvest Goddess. Ninlil is credited with giving birth to the moon. Still other accounts identify Lilith as the first wife of Adam, made from the earth's dust. She refuses to be considered inferior, and when Adam insists that she lay beneath him, she leaves to create a life of her own. It is then that Lilith is degraded and depicted as a night demon encouraging the libidos of men. The *Kabbalah* mentions that it is Lilith who encourages children to be born out of wedlock.

Chapter 41, The Shekhina

Chapter 41, The Shekhina Summary and Analysis

The Shekhina has origins in Hebrew lore, mentioned in both the *Talmud* and the *Kabbalah*. Her name is used synonymously with a figure known as The Bride of the Sabbath. There is speculation that she is also associated with a Sun Goddess known as Shapas. Although Shapas is a Sun Goddess, her rituals are held on the nights of the new and full moons. A Jewish prayer on the Sabbath requests that her "Mother love" fills the home.



Chapter 42, Remind Them of the Sekpoli —Africa

Chapter 42, Remind Them of the Sekpoli—Africa Summary and Analysis

It is Stone's opinion that Africa must be regarded as the true home of the Goddess as Mother since it is there that human life first appeared. It is important to remember that Africa is a vast continent containing many diverse cultures; thus the actions and symbolisms attributed to the African Goddesses are equally as diverse.

The testing of human values such as honesty, courage and concern for others seems to be a common thread running through many accounts of African Goddesses. These Goddesses were also said to live in homes similar to those of the people she is affiliated with, although it is understood that the sacred homes had amenities far beyond those of the earthly ones. The imagery of stars and water also play a significant role in the accounts of African Goddesses.



Chapter 43, Mawu

Chapter 43, Mawu Summary and Analysis

The Dahomey people of western Africa know Mawu as the omnipotent creator of all life. A central component of the Mawu story is the concept of Sekpoli. Sekpoli is likened to one's soul, but it is also a piece of Mawu that every person possesses within.

Mawu rides in the mouth of Aido Hwedo, a primeval serpent, as she creates the earth. Once she creates light, Mawu sees the vastness of her work. She is worried that the earth is too heavy and consequently sends Aido Hwedo underground to bear the weight of her creation. Mawu tasks a monkey with creating more animals from clay. As a reward, she helps the monkey walk upright like humans. The monkey wastes his time boasting to his friends about his assignment. Mawu returns to breathe life into the new animals and finds that the monkey had done nothing. She decides that the monkey would only waste the use of his hands and so it is to this day the monkey still walks with his hands.

Gbadu, the holy daughter of Mawu, guards her mother's creation. She notices that the earth is filled with fighting and turmoil, the people having forgotten her mother's teachings. Gbadu speaks to her own children and challenges them to go around the world teaching the wisdom of their Grandmother Mawu. She asks her children to remind the people of their Sekpoli—by fighting with one another they are fighting with Mawu. Gbadu also speaks to her oldest daughter, Minona. She decrees that Minona shall walk upon the earth and will be regarded as holy. Minona will teach the omens that can be read in the palm kernels. Minona will help the people to be wise once again and to know the doctrine of Mawu.

Gbadu's children spread the word of Mawu until almost all people once again know her wisdom, except for Awe. Awe is a boastful man who knows magic. He claims that he is as powerful as Mawu and he will challenge her. The people wonder if Awe is perhaps as mighty as Mawu. Awe throws two balls of thread into heaven and ascends upon his silken ladder. Awe chops down a tree from the jungle of heaven and carves a human form, claiming that he too has created life. Mawu asks him to breathe life into his creation, but Awe is unable to do so and admits defeat. Mawu knows that Awe will return to the earth and resume his boastful ways. To prevent the deception of her people, Mawu offers a meal of cereal to Awe. In the cereal is the seed of death. Awe returns to earth carrying the seed of death to remind the people that it is only she who can breathe the breath of life, and suck it out. The wise will treasure the life that has been given and the Sekpoli in each other.

Chapter 44, Ala

Chapter 44, Ala Summary and Analysis

Ala is the Goddess of the Ibo people in Nigeria. Ala creates and takes away life and also sets the laws for human morality. The Ibo people build a special house, a Mbari, in each village for Ala. A life-size image of Ala sits on the porch of the Mbari for all to see.



Chapter 45, Jezanna

Chapter 45, Jezanna Summary and Analysis

Jezanna is the moon to the Mashona people of Zimbabwe. She is represented on the earth through a high priestess. This narrative tells of the end of human sacrifice as part of the rituals honoring Jezanna.

Notambu, the high priestess to Jezanna, is filled with anxiety as her first festival approaches. She prepares herself for her leading role in the procession. The Ngana also prepares himself for the ceremony. He enters the jungle for a month where he meditates and consumes nothing but crocodile meat. The ceremony begins on the day of the full moon. Notambu leads the procession with the Ngana following behind her, dancing and shaking his zebra tail switch. The people, young and old, follow behind the Ngana. As they proceed the people play pipes and drums and sing of their sorrow for the life of the child they are about to sacrifice. It is their hope that Jezanna's mournful tears will rain upon their crops.

Notambu is touched by the fear in the child's eyes as the Ngana lays her upon the sacrificial altar. As the Ngana draws his knife, Notambu is unable to lead the holy sacrificial chant. She sweeps the child from the altar into her arms, for she knows that Jezanna does not want a child's life to be taken. Notambu pleads to the moon to spare the child's life and the moon appears glowing red in the sky as the sun still shines. Notambu informs the people that Jezanna speaks and says that no child's life will ever be taken ever again in sacrifice. The people's songs and dance change from those of lamentation to those of exultation at Jezanna's decree. It is said that sometimes, when the moon is full, the image of Notambu and the little girl can be seen bathing in the holy waters of the Davisa. By their side, Jezanna's light dances joyfully.



Chapter 46, Songi

Chapter 46, Songi Summary and Analysis

The Bantu people of central and southern Africa tell a tale of how the women came under the protection of Songi. Nsomeka is a young girl who, unlike her friends, finishes her chores before running off to play. As the tired girl runs to catch up with her friends she meets an old woman. Nsomeka is invited into the old woman's house for a drink of cool water. The old woman reveals herself to be Songi—the Mother. Songi explains that her house has appeared to Nsomeka because of her good heart. She tells Nsomeka that she needs her help to protect women from the beatings of their husbands. Songi binds her arm to Nsomeka's with a snake. Songi then uses a white stone to carve notches into Nsomeka's teeth.

Nsomeka returns to her village and gathers her mother and grandmother. The three stand in the field as the sun sets and they sing in chorus. As they sing, livestock, crops and houses fly from the notches in Nsomeka's teeth. The villagers are astounded in the morning when they wake. The men begin beating their wives for their inability to provide such riches. Nsomeka calls the women to join her in the field. She tells the story of Songi and begins the process of carving notches in the teeth of all the women—marking them with the sign of Songi's protection. The field continues to fill with livestock and houses. The men wish to stay in the newly formed village and promise to treat the women with respect forever.

Chapter 47, Mboze and Bunzi

Chapter 47, Mboze and Bunzi Summary and Analysis

To the Woyo people of Zaire, Mboze is the First Mother who lives at the mouth of the great river. Mboze takes her son, Makanga, as her lover. From this union, Bunzi, a serpent daughter, is born. Mboze's husband, Kuitikuiti, is filled with a jealous rage when he learns that Makanga is the father and beats Mboze to death. As Bunzi grows she learns to do the work of her mother. She pours the rains from the heavens and can be seen in the beauty of a rainbow.



Chapter 48, Mbaba Mwana Waresa

Chapter 48, Mbaba Mwana Waresa Summary and Analysis

The Zulu people of Natal tell the tale of how the Holy Rain Goddess, Mbaba Mwana Waresa, came to earth to choose her mate. The Goddess prepares for her wedding day in a most unusual way. She shaves her head, covers her body in ashes and dons the tattered skin of a zebra. Mbaba Mwana Waresa dresses her friend in the traditional garb of a Zulu bride. As the Goddess and her friend journey to the earth, the sky fills with a great storm. The chosen man anxiously waits for his bride to arrive. The earthly women attendants watch in anticipation, wondering if the groom will recognize his bride. Despite her downtrodden appearance, the groom graciously welcomes Mbaba Mwana Waresa. The wedding celebration fills the day. As evening sets Mbaba Mwana Waresa returns to the heavens with her new husband by her side.



Chapter 49, Mella

Chapter 49, Mella Summary and Analysis

This account of the mortal heroine Mella may be based upon an oral history of the Buhera Ba Rowzi people of Zimbabwe.

Mella's father has been sick for many months and is dying. Music and sacrifices have not worked to make him whole, nor has the magic of the Nganga healers. Mella is desperate to save her father. One night, as she is walking in the forest, the Moon Goddess Bomu Rambu speaks to Mella. She tells Mella that she must go visit the frightful Python Healer. Mella is terrified at the idea of visiting the Python Healer, as he has already frightened all of her brothers away, yet she travels for many days until she reaches his cave.

At the mouth of the ominous cave, Mella calls out to the Python Healer asking for his help in healing her ailing father. A voice calls out from the cave, wondering why she is not afraid. Mella explains that she is afraid, but her love for her father is more powerful than her fear. The Python Healer is intrigued and asks if Mella will turn her back and allow him to approach her. She obliges, and the Python Healer asks if Mella will allow him to coil around her body. She again agrees. She then returns to her village, carrying the weight of the large serpent. The people of her village are afraid of the serpent and threaten to kill the beast until Mella warns them off. The creature uncoils himself at the bedside of Mella's father. The Python Healer provides the ingredients and instructions to Mella necessary for healing her father. Mella's father is cured and grateful to Mella and the Python Healer.

The creature once again coils himself around Mella's small body and she carries him back to his cave. Once the Python Healer is back inside his cave he calls out to Mella and invites her in. Although she is still afraid, she enters. Mella is greeted with the sight of wondrous treasure. The Python Healer invites Mella to take all that she wishes, for he feels that her courage and love should be rewarded. Mella is embarrassed and feels that it is the serpent that deserves a reward. She humbly asks the Python Healer to choose for her. He selects a golden chain with the Ndoro Crescent Moon upon it—the sacred symbol of the Buheri Ba Rowzi.

Mella returns to her village and tells the people about the cave and its treasures. Her brothers become greedy and plot the murder of the Python Healer. Mella overhears their schemes and warns her new friend. The Python Healer scares the boys off with puffs of smoke and horrible growls. Ashamed of the boys' actions, the villagers send the boys off to live in the jungle for the rest of their lives. Years later, Mella is named queen of the Buhera Ba Rowzi.



Chapter 50, To Watch over the People of the Islands—Oceania

Chapter 50, To Watch over the People of the Islands—Oceania Summary and Analysis

The image of Goddess among the people of Australia and the Polynesian Pacific Islands can best be described as fiery. She is, of course, associated with volcanoes, but she is often depicted as having a fiery temperament. These Goddess accounts are rife with images of volcanic caves as the Goddess's womb. Half of the human spirit lives within the caves, guarded by the Goddess, while the other half lives within an earthly body. Once a person dies, the half-spirit returns to the cave to be reunited with its other half, and waits there to be reincarnated. Many of the legends highlight the Austroloid's contemplation of their lineage and origin, as well as spiritual concepts such as birth, death and the nature of the universe.



Chapter 51, Pele

Chapter 51, Pele Summary and Analysis

Pele is the Goddess whose spirit lives within Mt. Kilauea on Hawaii. Pele often desires handsome young chiefs. It is when she is denied that she stomps her feet and causes a volcanic eruption. Pele's eruptions are described in the brief free-verse poem as angry and scarring the earth. However, the lava cools into smooth black stone healing and forming the earth around her. Pele's priestesses are dressed in white robes with burnt edges. They carry a wand to symbolize the digging stick that Pele first used to dig the volcanic craters. Reverence for Pele can be seen as recently as 1955 when villagers offered food and tobacco to Pele in an effort to save their village from the volcano's deadly lava stream. The lava bypassed the village.



Chapter 52, Mahuea and Hina

Chapter 52, Mahuea and Hina Summary and Analysis

In this section, Stone compiles five accounts of the Goddess Mahuea and her daughter, Hina. The accounts come primarily from New Zealand, with additional resources taken from Hawaiian accounts.

1. Mahuea

The ancient Mother Mahuea brings the Maori people to their home in what is now New Zealand. When snakes overrun the land, Mahuea uses her digging stick to frighten them away. The stick breaks in half and flames burst from it. Mahuea has discovered fire and gives it as a gift to the Maori people. She teaches them how to use it and how to create it on their own. Within a hidden volcanic cave, along the side of a cool stream, Mahuea gives birth to the Holy Goddess Hina.

2. Mahuea and young Hina

Hina grows tall and strong as she learns from her mother how to live off the land.

3. Hina as a young woman

Mahuea imparts her greatest piece of knowledge upon Hina. She teaches her how to make fire and the imu oven. The imu fire is used in ceremonies as well as to cook food. There is a tale of Hina's people who are starving. She provides instructions on how to build the imu oven. Hina leaves her body for three days while the people stoke the fires of the oven. She travels underneath the earth until she finds a spring of fresh water. She brings the water up to the surface of the earth through a small crevice. Hina returns to her body and instructs the people to dig among the ashes of the fire, and there they find an abundance of food.

4. Hina and Maui

Hina gives birth to a rude and disrespectful son, Maui. Maui decides that he will take his mother's life and add her remaining years onto his. Hina discovers her son's plans and makes plans of her own. She must steal a drop of Maui's blood because it contains his hau, or his life essence. Hina calls upon a butterfly, a gnat and a mosquito to gather her son's hau. Each meets an untimely fate at Maui's hands and is unable to gather the single drop of blood. It is Manu, the sand fly, who is finally successful in obtaining a drop of Maui's blood. Hina casts a spell over Maui's hau that causes him to do only as she commands.

5. Hina of the Moon



As she grows older, Hina takes a husband hoping that he might help her with her work. Instead, he is lazy and mean. Hina spots a rainbow one day and plans to travel along it and live on the sun. As she moves closer to the sun, the heat is unbearable. Hina returns to her earthly home and her husband. Hina next decides to travel to the cool moon. Hina begins her journey when the sky has darkened but she finds that the rainbow road is difficult to see. She cautiously makes her way towards the moon, but before she reaches it her husband realizes her escape and chases after her. He beats Hina in an effort to make her stay with him and as he leaps to avoid her kick he falls off the rainbow and plummets to his death. Hina, aching and full of sorrow, continues on her path. The moon sends forth a gentle wash of light to ease Hina's bruises. Hina safely arrives at the moon and makes her home there. Hina lives there now and the women of the island refer to her as Hina of the Moon.

Chapter 53, Kunapipi

Chapter 53, Kunapipi Summary and Analysis

Kunapipi is the First Mother. Reverence for Kunapipi still exists today in the Arnhemland area of north-central Australia. Those who honor her consider themselves to be her descendants. It is with Kunapipi that half of the spirit resides while the other roams the other within the human body. Once a lifetime, a ritual is performed in which an initiate climbs into Kunapipi's "womb" to make contact with the other half of his soul and to hear the voice of the beloved Kunapipi. It is believed that the soul halves will reunite after death and Kunapipi will send one half back to the earth to live again.



Chapter 54, Fire Woman

Chapter 54, Fire Woman Summary and Analysis

Another account of the introduction of fire comes from the Sea Dyak culture of southern Borneo. It is yet another reference to woman as the discoverer of fire.

The women and children make their way through the jungle searching for food. They spot a giant snake, which they kill and eat. Just as they are lifting their supper to their mouths it begins to rain. The rain quickly floods the jungle sweeping away all but one woman and her infant. The woman makes her way to the top of a mountain and survives the flood. Cold winds blast the woman and her baby. She begins to rub her body against a tree to generate some heat for herself and the shivering infant. Sparks suddenly leap out from her body because her movements are so fast and hard. The sparks land upon dry leaves and twigs, creating the first fire. In the light of the fire, the woman sees a rabbit that she quickly catches and cooks. The woman and her son live for many years on the mountaintop until one day the waters finally recede. The woman and her grown son are the only survivors of the great flood and they take each other as husband and wife. They raise their children along the river Dyak and pass on the gift of fire. They also warn that the killing of a sacred snake could bring another storm of destruction.



Chapter 55, Star Girl

Chapter 55, Star Girl Summary and Analysis

Star Girl is a mortal spoken of by the people of the Nullarbor Plain of south-central Australia. Star Girl lives in the days when only the sun and moon light the sky. The moon is finicky and sometimes chooses not to show herself. On a night when the moon is absent Star Girl reaches into the fire and toss a handful of glowing embers into the heavens. The embers remain in the night sky providing light even when the moon is too tired.



Chapter 56, Lia

Chapter 56, Lia Summary and Analysis

This account comes from the southeast of Australia, an area now known as New South Wales. Lia is a Goddess who looks down upon the parched earth and sees that the Goanna people are not living as the Mother of Life had intended. She quickly becomes the chief's wife and works alongside the women of the tribe. Each day, the women venture out into the desert to find roots for dinner while the men disappear to parts unknown. The men return at dusk carrying one skin of water for all the women to share. It is not enough to quench their thirst; it barely moistens their parched lips. One night, Lia asks her husband where he finds the water that he brings to the women. He laughs as he pulls out his own water skin and tells her that the source of the water is the business of the men. Furthermore, he reminds her that the women are lucky that the men are so kind to bring them any water at all.

The next day, Lia encourages the women to search for their own water while they search for their roots. They head off in the direction of the men, toward the grey mountains. The women climb the mountain and search unsuccessfully for fresh water. The women return to the village more exhausted and parched than ever. The men beat the women for returning to the village so late and without enough roots for dinner. Lia's husband is the most violent and declares that the men must leave the village for a few days. He threatens the women with death if they go to the mountains again.

Lia is more determined than ever to find water for the women. The other women, however, are too afraid of their husbands and do not want to search with Lia. Two women reluctantly join Lia only to eventually abandon her. As the sun sets, Lia settles into a cool cave to rest her weary body. Suddenly throngs of little people, called the Tukonee, surround Lia and tell her to return the next day with all of the women. They instruct her to climb to the top of the mountain where she is to thrust her digging stick deep into a crevice—deep enough to "touch the heart of the mountain." Once done, the mountain will flow with fresh water.

Lia returns to the village and shares the news with the women. They are all eager to join her now. Lia follows the instructions of the Tukonee and water begins to flow from the mountain rocks just as was described. The women rejoice in the coolness of the water. When it is time to return to their village the women see that the water has created a great new river. The men return only to find that they have been separated from the women by the great river. That day the Goanna women set off to form their own tribe leaving the men to live by themselves on the other side of the Murumbidgee River.



Chapter 57, Arunta Sun Woman

Chapter 57, Arunta Sun Woman Summary and Analysis

The Arunta people of central Australia take a somewhat unusual view of the sun. Most ancient communities view the sun as a masculine image, while the moon is a feminine image. The Arunta people assign a feminine persona to the sun.

As the Sun Woman rises each day she carries a glowing torch of fire into the sky. As she sinks beneath the desert sands "those who have passed from earth" greet her. She honors the ancient souls and they provide her with a new red dress and torch for the next day's journey.



Chapter 58, While Amazons Danced an Armed Dance—Anatolia

Chapter 58, While Amazons Danced an Armed Dance—Anatolia Summary and Analysis

Ancient Anatolia is now known as Turkey. There is some confusion about the origin of the Amazons. Accounts of the Amazons often connect them to Anatolian cities. They are said to have migrated from "Libya." In the writings of Herodotus "Libya" refers to the African continent. However, the writings of Diodorus use the name "Libya" to refer to the country now known as Libya. Stone suggests that the issue is in need of further research. There is further confusion about the name of the Goddess worshipped by the Amazons. The Mother of the Deities is her name in Classical accounts. Some scholars seek to connect her with Kybele or Artemis. It is Stone's opinion that Lato, the mother of Artemis, is the name of the Goddess in question.

Stone admits that it is difficult to define Goddess reverence in this region because so many cultures have left their mark in this part of the world. Connections with Libya, Crete, Canaan, Mesopotamia and the Aegean islands can be found in the archaeological artifacts of Anatolia. Fragments of texts and inscriptions that span thousands of years provide just a glimpse into the life style of these ancient peoples.



Chapter 59, Great Grandmother of Anatolia

Chapter 59, Great Grandmother of Anatolia Summary and Analysis

Statues and shrines to the Goddess from early Neolithic sites in Catal Huyuk and Hacilar provide the information for this section. Writing was not yet developed at the time of these two cultures.

The Great Grandmother is depicted as sitting upon a throne of a lioness. In murals, she is dressed in vulture wings. It is speculated that the use of this sacred bird was used as part of the preparations for burying the dead. Pairs of horns can be seen rising up from the Goddess's altars. Possible ties with Egypt and India can be read into the presence of vultures and horns.



Chapter 60, Sun Goddess of Arinna

Chapter 60, Sun Goddess of Arinna Summary and Analysis

The Sun Goddess of Arinna is the greatest of the deities. She controls all leadership on earth and in heaven. It is the Sun Goddess who gives the right to rule to queens. She determines the holy days and rituals for the other deities.

The Sun Goddess is called Wurusemu by some and Arinitti by others. She has two daughters, Hulla and Mezulla, and one Granddaughter, Zintuhi. The Nuntariyashas Festival is held yearly and the Tawawannas priestess performs her rites, sacrificing a lamb in memory of the previous priestesses. The high priestess is the queen of the Land of Hatti. Once the queens are in heaven with the Sun Goddess, they too are known as Sun Goddesses.

Chapter 61, Hepat

Chapter 61, Hepat Summary and Analysis

A prayer written by Queen Pudu Hepat of Hattusas in 1300 B.C. reveals that she is of the opinion that Hepat is the Sun Goddess of Arinna.



Chapter 62, Hanna Hanna

Chapter 62, Hanna Hanna Summary and Analysis

Hanna Hanna is the Holy Grandmother who brought all life. She creates the Goddess sisters Istustaya and Papaya, who spin the thread of destiny. She creates Kamrusepa, the Goddess of healing. Hanna Hanna assigns the duty of bringing the rains to the earth to her grandson, Zaskhapuna. Once she is sure that all the duties are taken care of by her children, Hanna Hanna rests.

A time comes when the land is drought stricken. Zaskhapuna does not notice until he is thirsty. He places the blame on his son, Telipinu. Zaskhapuna has handed his duties off to his son and Telipinu is nowhere to be found. Zaskhapuna sends Eagle to find his son, but the Eagle is unsuccessful. Zaskhapuna goes to his father hoping to ease his conscience but doesn't find the solace that he seeks. His father places the blame on his shoulders and threatens him to find Telipinu quickly or else he will pay with his own life. Zaskhapuna next goes to the highest heaven to speak with the Grandmother. Hanna Hanna offers help, but does not offer her sympathy. She sends the Bee to find Telipinu. As he is resting under a tree in a forest the Bee stings Telipinu to awaken him and then flies off to fetch Eagle. Eagle carries Telipinu back to Hanna Hanna. Kamrusepa is waiting at the temple to heal Telipinu's bee stings and hurt feelings. She banishes all anger and confusion to a cauldron in the Otherworld. Hanna Hanna once again sits at the head of her family table knowing peace and satisfaction.



Chapter 63, Kybele (Cybele)

Chapter 63, Kybele (Cybele) Summary and Analysis

Kybele is closely associated with several other Goddesses. Her garb is similar to that of Hapat. Her stories and rituals are similar to those of Ishtar and Inanna in Mesopotamia. Kybele is the Mother of Deities the Magna Mater. Eunuchs flock to her, eager to shed their manhood and serve her. Priestesses take lovers to honor Kybele's dead son and lover, Attis. It is not known exactly how Attis dies. There are many accounts, yet most agree that his body is found, emasculated at the base of an evergreen tree. Kybele takes Attis's body along with the tree to the cave in which she lives. She plants the tree at the entrance to the cave and buries his body beneath it. She performs the rituals of mourning each spring at the site of his burial.

The ritual eventually makes its way to Rome as the Megalesia rituals. Sibyl priestesses announce that the stone of Kybele must be brought to Rome and that a temple must be built to house it. The ship carrying the stone is grounded on rocks at the mouth of the River Tiber. Sailors try to loosen the ship but fail. It is the woman Claudia Quinta who is finally able to free the ship from the rocks. Groups of women take turns pulling the ship the rest of the way to Rome.

Each year in Kybele is honored in Rome during the celebration of the Vernal Equinox. For three days men wear pomegranates on their heads and castrate themselves in memory of Attis. It is said that at the end of the third day, Attis rises from the dead. In joyous celebration, the revelers carry Kybele's statue to the River Tiber to be bathed, adorned with violets, and returned to the temple until the next spring. The Emperors Augustus and Claudius are known to have participated in the Megalesia rituals.



Chapter 64, Lato (Mother of Artemis)

Chapter 64, Lato (Mother of Artemis) Summary and Analysis

The stories of Lato are often attributed to Greece, yet her image is not plentiful in Greek records. Instead, evidence of her reverence is found more readily in Crete, Canaan, Arabia, Sinai, Egypt, Malta and Anatolia. The Anatolian accounts of Lato tell of her ride with the warrior Amazon women. It is believed that her name is derived from the word *Lat*, which literally means *Goddess* in Arabia, Syria and Canaan. In Arabia, the image of Lato is also that of the sun. In the Canaanite and Levantine lands she is known as the Holy Mother of the Sea and the Mother of Deities, respectively. The Greeks know her as the mother of Artemis, as well as the sun and the moon. The Greek Hesiod writes of Lato as a Titaness and a daughter of Phoebe, saying that it is she who gave the Goddess shrine of Delphi to Apollo. The issue is further confused by the Hellenic Greek accounts claiming that Eilythia served as midwife to Lato, at the same time claiming that the newborn Artemis aided in the birth of her twin brother, Apollo. Later, claims are made that Lato is Eilythia.

The Ephesians of Anatolia claim that Mother Lato gave birth to Artemis in a cave at the foot of the mountain near the sacred site of Ephesus. The Amazons therefore built the shrine of Ephesus near this sacred site. It is said that the shrine was built around a holy tree, a xoanan. Megabyzi eunuchs attend to the priestesses of the altar where the images of golden bees are held in deepest sanctity. Many shrines and temples to the Mother and Daughter can be found throughout western Anatolia.

In Roman times the site of Ephesus, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, is spoken of as the holy place of Diana. It is during Roman rule that Paul visits Ephesus and just as they had feared the worship of Mother and Daughter is replaced by the worship of Father and Son.

Chapter 65, Hecate

Chapter 65, Hecate Summary and Analysis

Hecate is the Goddess of witches and magic. She is "the dark side of the moon." At times Hecate is associated with the Greek Persephone, Queen of the Dead. She is depicted as an amphibian being that walks on dry land. She holds the reins to the moon. Hecate brings birth and rebirth. Dogs are most sacred to her as she is affiliated with the Dog Star, Sirius. It is possible that Hecate is another aspect of Isis or possibly Artemis.



Chapter 66, Anahita

Chapter 66, Anahita Summary and Analysis

The worship of holy Anait spreads from Anatolia into Iran as the worship of Anahita. Her name is sometimes given as Nana, mother of Attis. The Iranians claim that Ahura Mazda assigned the task of watching over the universe to Anahita. However, they also claim that Anahita is the heavens. She provides the rains to the rivers and crops and she creates life. She is the sun drawn across the sky in her chariot drawn by wind, rain, clouds, and sleet. Eagle wings sprout from her shoulders and she wears an eight-pointed crown.



Chapter 67, From the Waters of the Indus—India

Chapter 67, From the Waters of the Indus—India Summary and Analysis

There are many Goddess images in the land of India, all of which are a manifestation of the "thousand named Goddess who sits upon the thousand petalled lotus of the cosmos." Stone points out that in studying the Goddesses of India it is important to remember that reverence and ritual are a result of the combination of two very different racial and ethnic groups. The first group of people is the early Harappan culture. The Dravidians of today are thought to have descended from this group. The second group is the Aryans who started invading the Indus Valley around 2000 B.C. The meeting of these two groups eventually grew into the caste system, which still exists today. The Aryans appointed themselves as the highest caste, the Brahmins.

The Aryans recorded events in the *Vedas*. Images of Goddesses are not prominent in the *Vedas*. There are some aspects of nature that are presented as feminine, but these are insignificant when compared to the male deities. Two more texts, the *Tantras* and the *Puranas*, are considered to be less sacred by the Brahmanic leaders. These texts present the Goddess as powerful and as the dynamic force of the universe.



Chapter 68, Shakti

Chapter 68, Shakti Summary and Analysis

Shakti literally means power. Her accounts come primarily from the *Tantras*. Shakti reverence still exists today in non-Aryan areas of India. Shakti appears as a serpent image—as the serpent of Kundalini Yoga, and as the serpent rising to the Ajna Chakra of the forehead. These images may be compared to the Dravidian Naga serpent deities as well as the serpent symbolism of Egypt.

Shakti, represented by Devi, creates and nourishes all that exists. She is the Maha Devi of the 1,000 petalled lotus. Shakti is the power and energy; consciousness and bliss found in all beings. She is the infinite Cosmic Energy. She is omnipotent and can never be completely known. There are many worlds, and a goddess or god rules each, but Shakti is the One Great Mother of all existence. Even the gods and goddesses bow down at her feet in worship.



Chapter 69, Devi (Durga, Parvati, Laksmi, Tara)

Chapter 69, Devi (Durga, Parvati, Laksmi, Tara) Summary and Analysis

The word *devi* (female form of *deva*) is a Sanskrit word that means deity, or literally translated, "glowing with brilliant illumination." Devi is a representation of the all-powerful Shakti. She has many aspects including Sita, Radha, Sri, Laksmi, Tara and Kali. Durga is one of the many names of Devi, but it has not always been so. Durga is the name that once belonged to a demon buffalo.

There is a time when Demon Durga causes great chaos. He brings floods and droughts, and uproots the mountains and oceans with his great horns. He captures every Goddess and forces them to do his housework. The people pray to the God Shiva to destroy the evil Durga, but he is unable to do so. Shiva asks for the help of Devi, for he knows that she is Shakti, and is more powerful than Durga. Devi is too busy, so she sends the guardian of the night, Kalatri, to do the job. Devi soon realizes that she must destroy the Demon Durga herself, for even Kalatri is not powerful enough.

Devi prepares for battle, and Durga is also prepared. He has readied 120 million elephants, chariots, horses and troops. Devi is unfazed by the storm of arrows that attacks her body. Devi throws a lasso around the buffalo's tail, but he quickly turns into a lion. Although Devi plunges a sword into the lion's neck, he becomes a soldier with sword and shield. The evil Durga next takes the shape of an elephant and creates a mountain of wickedness. Durga hurls the mountain at Devi, and she easily slices through it with her sword, creating seven small hills.

The battle rages on until the buffalo takes his true form—the manifestation of all evil. Durga reveals himself as Durga, complete with 1,000 arms. Devi fiercely fights against Durga, matching him arm for arm and hand for hand. Suddenly, at the height of the battle, Devi pulls back. The spectators of the world fear that she's admitting defeat. Devi calmly takes a sip of the blood red wine, then calls out to Durga telling him to laugh, for it will be his last. Devi finishes the wine and then places her foot upon the demon's neck. She roars with laughter as she pierces his body with her trident. In celebration of Devi's conquest, she is given Durga's name.



Chapter 70, Kali

Chapter 70, Kali Summary and Analysis

Kali is another aspect of the Goddess Devi. Her name literally means *time*. The accounts of Kali come primarily from the *Purana*. The racism inherent in the Indian caste system can be detected in the descriptions of Kali. Because of her blackness she is said to be less spiritually developed.

Kali is the essence of Night, called Sleep and Dream. She is the dancer of the cremation grounds, always joyous. Her four arms are depicted holding a trident, a sword, a lotus and a pot of honey. She lives on the summit of Mount Vindhya, reborn to Yasoda for the wicked Kamsa had murdered her as an infant.



Chapter 71, Anasuya

Chapter 71, Anasuya Summary and Analysis

Anasuya is a mortal woman who sits upon the banks of the Ganges meditating. Three Gods appear before her. Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma all desire the mortal woman. Anasuya sits quietly for she has always been taught to respect these Gods. The three Gods violently fall upon Anasuya despite that fact that her husband, Atri, is sitting by her side. Anasuya is shocked by the attack and despite her reverence for them she rages and hurls insults at them. She calls them "The Phallus," "The Head," and "The Two Feet." She warns them that all worshippers will laugh at them for they are sons to all mortal women. Anasuya explains that if they are to be revered as holy beings, they must first learn to know her as their mother.

Chapter 72, Sarasvati

Chapter 72, Sarasvati Summary and Analysis

Sarasvati's spirit is associated with the Sarasvati River. She takes an anthropomorphic form to present the knowledge of writing to the son of the Goddess Parvati. She is sometimes described as Brahma's wife. She is the Goddess of the arts, particularly writing.



Chapter 73, The Goddesses of Assam

Chapter 73, The Goddesses of Assam Summary and Analysis

Assam is located on the southern ridges of the Himalayas and is inhabited by the Khasi people. The Mother Earth brought forth four children—Goddess Ka Um of the waters, Goddess Ka Ding of the fire, Goddess Ka Sngi of the sun, and the God U Bnai who is the moon. While the children are young, the moon shines just as bright as his sister sun. Ka Sngi dutifully appears everyday to light her mother's work. U Bnai does not care to do his chores; instead he disappears for days on end. He leads a life of indulgence and promiscuity. There comes a time when U Bnai returns home, his head still full of lewd ideas. The moon looks upon his sister the sun, Ka Sngi, and is filled with desire for her. After she rejects his advances, U Bnai attempts to take his sister by force. Ka Sngi, enraged by the attack, reaches into her fire and hurls the ashes at her brother. The ashes dim the light of the moon. U Bnai shamefully flees into the night, seldom to be seen in the light of day ever again.

Many eons later, Mother Earth has grown old. Her three daughters discuss how they will perform their mother's funeral rites so that her soul will be free from her vast body. Ka Sngi, the Sun Goddess, sends down great waves of heat that scorch her mother's body, but do not free her soul. The Goddess of Water, Ka Um, sends great floods in an effort to change her mother's body but is unsuccessful and her mother's soul is still captive. Finally, Ka Ding, Goddess of Fire, burns her mother's body until the intensity of the heat causes Mother Earth to burst into flames. Boiling lava heaves from Mother Earth's body, blistering the mountains and forming deep valleys. The waters that remain from Ka Um's floods flow into the new crevices, forming rivers. Ka Ding was successful in changing the Earth's body enough to free her soul.



Chapter 74, Rangada

Chapter 74, Rangada Summary and Analysis

Rangada, a mortal woman, leads her people through hunt and battle. One day she discovers a young man, Arjuna, sleeping in the woods. Rangada is immediately smitten with the handsome Arjuna. Arjuna denies Rangada's advances for he has just taken a vow of celibacy. Additionally, he views Rangada as unwomanly and outspoken—characteristics he does not desire in a woman. Rangada is deeply hurt by Arjuna's words. She rids herself of her bow and arrow and her hunting clothes. In their stead, she adorns beautiful silks and gold jewelry. Rangada slips into Arjuna's tent undetected while he is meditating. When he opens his eyes, he sees Rangada, as Malha, lying upon his mat and beckoning to him.

Malha and Arjuna live together for several months as joyful lovers. After a year of bliss, a group of villagers ride past Arjuna's camp. They ask if he has seen their beloved leader, a woman with perfect aim and a courageous heart. The villagers have been under attack since their leader disappeared. Rangada hears the villagers from within her tent and her heart goes out to them. She is fearful that Arjuna will be angry once he discovers her true identity, yet she still reveals herself to her old friends. The villagers rejoice when they see Rangada as she mounts her horse. Arjuna, although surprised, mounts a horse and joins alongside Rangada Malha.



Chapter 75, Ushas

Chapter 75, Ushas Summary and Analysis

Ushas is the Goddess of dawn. Her image is of Indo-European origin and may be regarded as the same as Eos of Greece and Aurora of Rome. Ushas rises in the eastern sky in a chariot drawn by seven cows. She is followed by 100 golden chariots. Her veils flow behind her, coloring the morning sky.



Chapter 76, Of Sea and Star and Serpent —Sumer

Chapter 76, Of Sea and Star and Serpent—Sumer Summary and Analysis

Sumer is the most ancient literate civilization on record. Images of Goddess reverence in Sumer provide a creator of heaven and earth, a provider of the laws of life, and teachers of writing and agriculture. Unfortunately, there is limited intact information about the ancient Sumerian civilization, so it is possible that the Goddess accounts are incomplete. An important concept in Sumerian civilization is that of the bestowal of the divine right to rule.

Chapter 77, Nammu

Chapter 77, Nammu Summary and Analysis

Nammu is the earliest recorded name of a universe-creating deity. Nammu is the mother who gives birth to the heaven and earth and all deities. It is Nammu who created Dilmun, the idyllic ancient homeland. When Nammu decides that humans should be created she assigns the task to her daughter Ninmah. She is known as Mother Primeval Sea. It is interesting to note that the symbol for Nammu's name is identical to the symbol for the ocean.



Chapter 78, Nina (Nintu, Nanshe, Ninmah, Ninhursag, Ninlil, Ningal)

Chapter 78, Nina (Nintu, Nanshe, Ninmah, Ninhursag, Ninlil, Ningal) Summary and Analysis

Nina is most often depicted as having the tail of a serpent or fish. The word *Nin* precedes many Sumerian Goddess names and is sometimes translated as Goddess or Lady. Since Nina is the most basic form of the title Nin, Stone has included several other Goddess names and aspects in this piece. These other deities do appear as separate from Nina in Sumerian tablets. The general consensus is that each of these Goddesses was originally known as the Mother Goddess of a specific community. A sampling of the many Goddesses covered is listed below:

Nin Sikil watches over Nammu's island of Dilmun.

Nanshe is the Judge of Humankind.

Ninhursag is the Goddess of healing. She gave birth to the healing plants.

Ninlil taught the people how to sow and harvest the grain.



Chapter 79, Nidaba

Chapter 79, Nidaba Summary and Analysis

Nidaba is often symbolized as a serpent or as having a serpent tail. She is regarded as the Goddess of writing. It is she who created the stylus that is pressed into the clay tablets. Priestesses of her temple, or Naditu, were in charge of recording land assignments. Nidaba is also credited with writing the sacred laws of Lagash. Her seven arms are said to hold the seven tablets that contain the 50 decrees of righteousness. Nidaba's scribe, Belit Sheri, is charged with recording the deeds of all humankind upon the leaves of the Tree of Life. Each new year the goddess Nanshe judges humankind based on their deeds in accordance with the sacred laws.



Chapter 80, Inanna

Chapter 80, Inanna Summary and Analysis

Inanna is the most widely known Goddess name among the Sumerians. Inanna was born to the Goddess Ningal (or Ninmah), daughter of the Goddess Nammu. Inanna is said to have held full power of judgment and control of the law of heaven and earth. She watches over all as the morning and evening stars and the planet Venus.

Each new year Inanna prepares for the sacred mating ritual. She chooses for her bed the man that will be appointed as shepherd. He is always referred to as Damuzi, the deceased lover and son of Inanna. The man must prove his worth in bed before he is officially appointed. The priestesses of Inanna's temple make love to those who come to pray, initiating them so that they may gain Inanna's wisdom of life's creative process.

There is a tale of Inanna's visit to her father, Enki's shrine in Eridu. Enki is nervous in Inanna's presence and so drinks too much. In his drunken state he gives Inanna all the gifts of culture, 100 Mes. Enki changes his mind as Inanna is loading the Mes onto her boat. Enki sends a group of monsters to attack the boat. With the help her assistant, Ninshuber, Inanna manages to fight the monsters off and arrive safely back at Erech. Inanna gives the Mes as gifts to the city of Erech. She gives the people weaving and pottery; sowing and harvesting; justice, truth, and understanding; wisdom and the governing laws; and sexual rituals.

There are many tales of Inanna and Damuzi. One tale of Damuzi's death begins with Inanna's descent into the Land of the Dead. Inanna finds that she is a captive. She arranges a deal in which she must supply a life in substitution for her own. She is accompanied by Gallas, a death demon, on her trip back to heaven. Inanna meets several Gods along the way and each one bows to her in deference and she spares their lives. When Inanna reaches her temple at Erech she is shocked to see that Damuzi has claimed her throne and is rejoicing at her disappearance. Inanna allows the Gallas to take Damuzi to the Land of No Return.



Chapter 81, Ereshkigal

Chapter 81, Ereshkigal Summary and Analysis

Ereshkigal is the Goddess who reigns over Irkalla, the Land of the Dead. She is sometimes described as Inanna's sister, but her accounts seem to predate Inanna's.

The Annunaki are planning a great feast. Ereshkigal must decline the invitation to the party as she is too busy. She chooses Namtar, her loyal assistant, to attend the party in her place. Each deity but one bows to Namtar out of respect for Ereshkigal. Nergal, the God of war and disease, refuses to pay his respects to Namtar. Upon hearing of Nergal's disrespect, Ereshkigal demands that he come to Irkalla to apologize. Namtar is sent to fetch Nergal. Before he leaves heaven Nergal is instructed by the God Ea to refuse everything offered by Ereshkigal. It is Ea's hope to undermine Ereshkigal's powers. Nergal forgets all warnings when he sees Ereshkigal in all her glory. He falls to his knees and kisses the ground before her feet. He soon finds himself on her couch of pleasures. After seven days of pleasure Nergal asks to return home, promising to return soon.

Back in heaven, Ea once again seeks to lead the young god astray. He points out that Ereshkigal will want to keep Nergal on her couch of pleasure forever and he will have to give up all of his former pleasures—war and pestilence. Namtar arrives in heaven to bring Nergal back, but not before Ea arms him with an assortment of supplies for overcoming Ereshkigal. Nergal plants warrior demons and he passes out false tokens at the seven gates as he descends into the Land of the Dead. His mind is on war when he enters into Ereshkigal's presence, but he is also soon overcome with desire for Ereshkigal. Nergal begins to think that he can have both the love of Ereshkigal and his love of war. He quickly pulls her from her throne and throws her to the ground. Nergal threatens to cut Ereshkigal's head off unless she agrees to be his wife. Realizing that her life is at stake, Ereshkigal agrees and Nergal takes control of the Land of No Return.



Chapter 82, She Who Makes the Universe Spin Round—Egypt

Chapter 82, She Who Makes the Universe Spin Round—Egypt Summary and Analysis

The roles of Goddesses played a vital role in ancient Egypt. Goddess symbols of ancient Egypt can still be found in modern Egypt today, including the Uraeus serpent emerging as the Third Eye, the vulture that protects in death, and the cow upon whose belly the stars shine. The consolidation of Upper and Lower Egypt in 3000 B.C. plays an important role in Goddess reverence. Each area was symbolized by its own important Goddess figure. There are contradictory accounts of creation from each area. This all leads to a great deal of confusion in contemporary texts on Egyptian beliefs.

Furthermore, it is Stone's opinion that many scholars simply ignore several instances of feminine influence in traditional Egyptian lore.



Chapter 83, Ua Zit

Chapter 83, Ua Zit Summary and Analysis

Ua Zit is the Cobra Goddess. She existed before Egypt was born and before the Creation and is known as the Uraeus serpent, the eye that appears on the foreheads of other Egyptian deities and royalty. She is associated with images of Au Set (Isis). Some legends say that she took Au Set as a daughter, protected her in childbirth, and protected Isis's child. Ua Zit is credited with creating the first stylus for recording on papyrus, bone, or clay.



Chapter 84, Maat

Chapter 84, Maat Summary and Analysis

Maat is most often described as an abstract concept, yet in murals and sculptures she is depicted as a woman with an ostrich feather on her head. Maat is referred to as The Eye of Heaven, but she is associated with the heart where moral judgments are made. The assembly of deities, the Ennead, rules by Maat's edicts. Maat watches the earth as the Morning Star and the Evening Star. Upon death, Maat greets each soul and judges it. In her scales she weighs each heart against the ostrich feather. Those who have a light heart have led a good and just life. She ties a blindfold around her eyes so that she may remain impartial. Maat announces the judgment so that it may be recorded on the leaves of the Tree of Life.



Chapter 85, The Lady of the Amenta

Chapter 85, The Lady of the Amenta Summary and Analysis

Amenta is the heaven where righteous souls live once they leave this earth. Once Maat has judged a soul as having a light heart, it is granted everlasting peace and entrance to Amenta. The Lady of the Amenta greets the souls on the holy mountain of heaven. She is a multi-faceted Goddess with many names and traits. It may be important to point out here that Au Set (Isis) is known as "Mother of One Thousand Names."



Chapter 86, Seshat

Chapter 86, Seshat Summary and Analysis

Seshat is the Goddess of Writing and the Ruler of Books. She invented hieroglyphs and numbers as well as the stylus and papyrus. She is also the scribe who writes the deeds of the dead on the Tree of Life. Seshat is the Divine Architect who designed the first temples.

Chapter 87, Hathor

Chapter 87, Hathor Summary and Analysis

Hathor, the Great Mother of Heaven, is the cow of the heavens and provides the milk of life. She is the Goddess of Motherhood and Fertility. She comes to the birth of each infant and tells of the child's destiny. She teaches of love and how life is made. She teaches about music and dance. It is her image that is on the sistrum rattle.

The Feast of Hathor is held on the first day of each new year. Celebrations include the music of the sistrum and the drinking of red barley beer. There are two tales explaining the origins of this feast. The first tale involves Hathor's father, Ra, calling for help. A group of men are plotting to against Ra. Hathor takes the form of a lion and slays the men. She finds that she likes the taste of blood and does not stop killing. Ra, fearing for all humankind, creates the red barley beer and pours it on the ground to resemble blood. Hathor drinks the beer until she is drunk and returns to her gentle form.

The second tale tells of Hathor's anger with the world she created. She takes the form of a lion and leaves for the land of Nubia. In her absence there is great chaos. Hathor's brothers, Shu and Thoth, take the forms of lions and seek her out. They tell her about the grief in Egypt and she is filled with compassion for her people and returns to restore peace and harmony.



Chapter 88, Neit

Chapter 88, Neit Summary and Analysis

Egyptian texts are filled with references to the Goddess as Nut, Net, Nit, Neit and Neith. Scholars debate whether these names belong to one Goddess or several. Part of the confusion comes from the lack of vowels in Egyptian hieroglyphs. Neit is the Mistress of the Celestial Ocean. She takes the hand of each person who dies and places them as stars in the universe of her body. Neit is the mother of Isis. Some say she's the primeval waters that once covered the earth, known as Nuneit. Others say that she is Tufneit, provider of rain and sunlight. She is all that has ever been, is, or shall be. She ascended from the primeval waters and her body became the heavens. A tear from her eye created the Nile. She gives birth to the sun at the start of each day and accepts him back into her body each evening.



Chapter 89, Au Set (Isis)

Chapter 89, Au Set (Isis) Summary and Analysis

Isis is the name associated with the most popular image of the Goddess in Egypt. *Isis* literally means Ancient Ancient. It is the Greek interpretation of the name that the Egyptians used, Au Set or Au Sept. Au Set is identified with the star Sirius, a bright star that is part of the constellation Canis Major, which appears on the horizon just before dawn at the time of year when the Nile floods (mid June).

It is said that Au Set created the River Nile from a tear from her eye. She teaches the sowing and harvesting of wheat and barley. The knowledge of justice and law comes from Au Set. She provides the wisdom of pregnancy and teaches of the seed that soothes a crying baby. Au Set gives the gift of knowing a child's sex before he or she is born. She explains how to create the protective amulet, the sacred loop of Au Set.

There comes a time when Au Set knows all except the secret name of Ra. She creates a serpent that bites and paralyzes Ra. None of the deities know how to help Ra. Au Set offers her help if he will tell her his secret name. He reluctantly agrees, and it is in this way that Au Set became omnipotent.

Another tale is told of when Au Set first discovered the knowledge of planting seeds. She is so excited with the new knowledge that she shares it with her brother, Au Sar, or Osiris. He goes off to tell the others, but his jealous brother Seth murders him. Seth sends Osiris's body out to sea in a casket. Au Set searches for Osiris's body, finds the casket at the Temple of Ashtart in Byblos and returns it to Egypt. She plans on giving Osiris a proper burial, but first she inseminates herself with the seed of her brother. Ua Zit helps Au Set during childbirth and protects the child Horus when Au Set must leave. Seth once again steals the body of Osiris, this time cutting it into fourteen pieces and scattering it along the banks of the Nile. Au Set searches for each piece, burying them when found. She never finds the fourteenth part, Osiris's phallus.



Chapter 90, Isis (after Apuleius)

Chapter 90, Isis (after Apuleius) Summary and Analysis

The Romans celebrated Isis and erected many temples to her. The Roman writer Apuleius wrote of his travels in *Metamorphoses* or *The Golden Ass* in the second century B.C. In his passages he describes his plea for help from Isis when he finds himself trapped in the form of a donkey.

Isis rises from the sea and declares, "I am Nature, Mother of All." Apuleius prays to Isis, "All other deities, whether bountiful or merciless, do reverence to Thee. It is Isis who rules the world..." He promises to always remember her help and keep her in his heart.



Chapter 91, To Walk the Trail of Beauty— Native Americans of North America

Chapter 91, To Walk the Trail of Beauty—Native Americans of North America Summary and Analysis

The diverse accounts of Native American Goddesses provide images of mother as creator, earth as mother, woman as nature, woman as ancestral mother, and woman as teacher of culture. The Native American myths reveal a deep connection with the earth and the processes of nature. A great deal of significance is also placed on dreams and visions. They provide spiritual knowledge, predictions of the future, and cultural information.



Chapter 92, Spider Woman

Chapter 92, Spider Woman Summary and Analysis

Spider Woman is known as Creator to the Pueblo people of southwest North America. She is all that there is in the beginning. She spins a line from North to South and from East to West. She sits by her lines and sings until two daughters come forth. Ut Set becomes the mother of the Pueblo people while Nau Ut Set becomes the mother of all others. They create the sun and moon, placing them high into the sky. The Spider Woman and her daughters create the Star People to provide light when the moon has traveled so far away. Spider Woman next creates people using the clay of the earth. She covers the people with creative wisdom and she attaches a thread to each person's head. Each person must keep the doorway at the top of his head open in order to that connect with Spider Woman and the creative wisdom.

A time comes when many have forgotten about their doorways. The people are corrupt and cruel with one another. Spider Woman washes the forgetful people away three times. She saves those who have remembered their doorways. She teaches them to build boats to survive the floods until the time comes that they might enter the Fourth World. The time comes when they may crawl up through the Womb of Mother Earth, the Sipapu hole. The people are provided with corn, prayer sticks, stones and eagle feathers.

Chapter 93, Huruing Wuhti

Chapter 93, Huruing Wuhti Summary and Analysis

The Creation story of the Hopi people of southwestern North America presents a double image of the Creator Goddess. Huruing Wuhti in the House of the Ocean of the East and Huruing Wuhti in the House of the Ocean of the West are the Sister Mothers of the World. They created the earth at a time when the entire universe was the Great Sea. The sisters wonder if there is life upon the earth, so they meet in the middle of the rainbow bridge that connects them. Together, they create a tiny bird and send it to seek out life. The bird returns and informs the Two Mothers that he did not find any life. The Two Mothers then create all the animals that live on the earth. Next, they create a woman and name her Tuwabontums. Last, they create a man and name him Muingwu. The first woman and man become the parents of the Hopi people.



Chapter 94, Changing Woman

Chapter 94, Changing Woman Summary and Analysis

Changing Woman is the Navajo concept of the processes of Nature. She is the creator of the Navajo people and the Mother Earth who is the seasons. The four mountains of the compass points are said to have grown from her body. She creates the Navajo people by rubbing her skin. She teaches of the flow of life. Young girls passing into womanhood enter into the House of Changing Woman. The Navajo know that to try to "change the ways of Changing Woman, is to destroy all life."

Chapter 95, White Shell Woman

Chapter 95, White Shell Woman Summary and Analysis

The Navajo people explain how light was created through the story of the birth of White Shell Woman. She is sometimes seen as Changing Woman's sister and other times she is an aspect of Changing Woman. White Shell Woman is born at the foot of Mount Tacoli. Her cradle is made of two rainbows; her blanket is woven from clouds. The infant can feel that the world has been sad and troubled for a long time. She forms a circle of turquoise and white shells. She holds a crystal over the disc until it bursts into flames. She hoists the flaming ball into the heavens with the help of the Holy People.



Chapter 96, Asintmah

Chapter 96, Asintmah Summary and Analysis

Like so many other Native American groups of North America, the Athapascan people of western Canada believe in the idea of Earth as Mother. Asintmah, the first woman of Earth, appears at the foot of Mount Atiksa. She gathers branches from the forest and builds the first loom. She then weaves The Great Blanket of Earth and spreads it over the Earth's vast body. She sits at the edge of the blanket and sings songs about the lives that Earth will bear. Earth begins to have contractions and not long after children are born. Asintmah reaches underneath the blanket to retrieve the Earth's newborn babies. Asintmah finds that Earth has given birth to Mouse, Rabbit, Cougar, Caribou, Moose and all the other beings that walk upon the Earth.



Chapter 97, Awehai

Chapter 97, Awehai Summary and Analysis

The Iroquois people of the northeastern United States offer this explanation of how the earth was formed. In the times before there were people on earth, there were other beings in other worlds. Among these beings is the woman Awehai, her husband, and another man. The husband unjustly accuses Awehai of loving the other man more. He uproots the tree at the center of the world, creating a giant chasm, and throws the innocent woman to her death. Awehai falls through the great dark hole and as she falls, grasps at seeds and beavers, otters and toads. She falls until the endless ocean of another world spreads out below her. Winged creatures softly catch Awehai and set her on top of the Great Turtle. The beavers, otters, and toads gather the dirt from the uprooted tree. They press the dirt together forming an island that we now know of as Earth. Awehai scatters the seeds upon the Earth. Awehai next brings forth children, the Iroquois people, to live on the Earth.



Chapter 98, Somagalags

Chapter 98, Somagalags Summary and Analysis

The stories of Somagalags come from the Bella Coola people who live along the coasts of British Columbia. Somagalags descends from heaven, finds a man and becomes pregnant. She gives birth to three mountains Kuga Mountain, Zaychisi and Mountain Segos. When the mountains are full grown, Somagalags leaves for the beach. She builds herself a cedar cabin. She once again gives birth, but this time to four wolf cubs. She places them in the warmest corner of her cabin as she goes to the beach to fetch clams for them. When she returns to the cabin, Somagalags is surprised to hear the sounds of children's laughter coming from inside. When she enters the cabin, she sees her newborn cubs fast asleep. Years pass by and Somagalags is old and weary. As she returns from yet another clam collecting trip, she again hears the sounds of voices and laughter from within her cabin. She peeks through the window and sees that her wolf cubs are four grown men. Somagalags climbs through the window and berates the young men for their trickery. The young men apologize and promise to pay their mother back. Somagalags teaches her boys to hunt for their own clams and to build their own cabins. She teaches them to carve the totem for their Clan of Somagalags.



Chapter 99, Queskapenek

Chapter 99, Queskapenek Summary and Analysis

The Salish tribe provides this tale as an explanation for the fertile soils in the Okanagan Valley in southern British Columbia. Queskapenek is a mortal woman who gives birth to her children along the banks of the Okanagan River. It is also on these banks that her grandchildren are born. As Queskapenek grows old and her days are numbered, she worries about her children and grandchildren. She wants to always mother them and provide for them. Queskapenek takes her basket and walks into the woods to gather only the tastiest roots and plants. She gathers until her basket is full and repeats this task for vegetable and fruit seeds. She plants her abundant treasures in the earth where the soil is nurtured by the mountain waters. In this way Queskapenek is still providing for her children.



Chapter 100, Spider Grandmother

Chapter 100, Spider Grandmother Summary and Analysis

The image of Spider Grandmother of the Kiowa people is not related to the images from the Pueblo people of spider as creator.

The council of animals meets in the hopes of resolving the problem of eternal darkness. Rabbit, Eagle and Woodpecker brag that they will be able to bring light to their world, but each fails to do so. Spider Grandmother is met with laughter when she suggests that she might be able to solve the problem. She heads east, in search of the land of the Sun People. As she walks, Spider Grandmother spins a thread behind her so that she may find her way back. She comes across a bed of wet clay and makes a bowl. She walks for many days until she sees the red glow of the land of the Sun People. Before anyone can notice her, she pinches off a small piece of the bright orange flame and places it in her bowl. As she journeys home the fire in her bowl grows brighter and larger.

Soon the brightness and heat are so unbearable that Spider Grandmother tosses the flame into the sky. The ball of fire stays in the heavens and becomes the sun. Clever Spider Grandmother was able to pinch off a piece of the fire before tossing it into the air. She brings this piece back to the animal council and gives them the gift of fire for the cooking of their food.



Chapter 101, Sun Sister

Chapter 101, Sun Sister Summary and Analysis

The following is an Eskimo account of how the sun and moon came to be in the sky. Men and women gather in the singing house to sing and laugh together. A fierce wind blows the lamps out and all is dark and silent. A scream is heard, for Sister has been attacked. She rubs her hands in the soot on the floor and places a handprint on the back of her attacker. When the lamps are relit, Sister sees that it is Brother who attacked her. Outraged at her brother's betrayal she seizes a knife and plunges it into his chest. She lights a log and carries it as a torch to light her way home. Brother follows suit, determined to prevent Sister from telling what happened.

His wound too great, Brother falls upon his torch in the snow. Sister sees this and despite his betrayal, she turns to help him. As she turns, Sister is lifted with her blazing torch into the heavens, where she becomes the sun. Brother is also lifted with his smoldering torch and becomes the moon. The dim moonlight is meant to serve as a reminder to all men of Brother's horrible deed, so that none will repeat it.

Chapter 102, Pohaha

Chapter 102, Pohaha Summary and Analysis

The legend of Pohaha is based on an actual woman of the Cottonwood Clan of the Pueblo people. Pohaha is a girl that does not like to stay home and help with the womanly chores, but instead enjoys playing as the boys do. Her uncles tease her for this. At 19 years of age, Pohaha refuses to marry and settle down, preferring to roam the woods and hunt. An enemy raids the Cottonwood Clan and Pohaha's uncles joke that she should help to drive out the enemy. Pohaha accepts the challenge, leading the men into battle. Before she enters into battle, Pohaha lifts her skirt so that the enemy can see that she is a woman. The raiders are defeated and Pohaha leads the joyous men back to their home. A great feast and celebration is held for the defenders of the village. The elders present Pohaha with the Mask of Valor, the mask of bravery and daring.



Chapter 103, Pasowee, the Buffalo Woman

Chapter 103, Pasowee, the Buffalo Woman Summary and Analysis

The story of Pasowee is from the Kiowa people. Pasowee was stolen from her people when she was just an infant. Pasowee lives with her captors for many years until one day she escapes. On the night of her escape, she takes refuge in the hide of a dead buffalo. Pasowee dreams that a buffalo comes to life and talks to her. He teaches her the many uses of his body as well as how to find her people. The next morning Pasowee witnesses a buffalo being attacked by wolves, just as the buffalo in her dream had foretold. After the wolves leave, she gathers some buffalo meat and dries it, just as the dream buffalo had taught her. She starts again on her journey to rejoin her people. They are overjoyed at her return. Pasowee teaches her people all the secrets she learned from the buffalo. She shows them how to heal with the medicine of the buffalo, and she teaches them how to construct a tipi.



Chapter 104, Wild Pony

Chapter 104, Wild Pony Summary and Analysis

The legend of Wild Pony is a legend of primeval times told by the Jicarilla Apache people. An old man, Smoke, and an old woman, Wild Pony, appeared on the plains when time began. A magic being, a hatsin, joins them. He explains that they will become the parents of a great and noble tribe, but must first learn to live off the land. He teaches the old couple about the silver to be found in rocks and the planting of corn and grain.

One day the hatsin appears and wishes to speak with Wild Pony alone. He shows her the wild horses and tells her that the horses will help her as long as they are treated as friends. The hatsin then shows Wild Pony the red clay, rubbing some on the palms of her hands. He tells her that the clay is hers to use. He teaches her how to form bowls and later appears to her in a dream and teaches her that the bowls must first be dried and fired before they will carry water. Over the years, Wild Pony and Smoke have many children and grandchildren. When her granddaughter is eight years old, Wild Pony teaches her the art of shaping the clay into bowls. Wild Pony is saddened when the young girl's clay bowl cracks and falls apart. The hatsin appears to Wild Pony one last time. He tells her the secret to molding the red clay. He also gives her one last gift of knowledge. The next day Wild Pony takes her granddaughter's hands, rubs the clay on her palms, and says, "Now the clay is yours to use."

Instead of making a bowl, Wild Pony teaches the girl how to make a peace pipe. They fill the pipe with tobacco leaves just as the hatsin had instructed. Smoke watches as they smoke the pipe and tries, unsuccessfully, to make his own pipe. The girl, feeling sorry for her grandfather, presents the pipe to him. It is now a tradition that when a girl turns eight she is given the gift of the red clay. She creates a sacred peace pipe and presents it to her people.

Chapter 105, The Golden Mirror of Ise— Japan

Chapter 105, The Golden Mirror of Ise—Japan Summary and Analysis

The Goddess imagery of Japan comes from records that were written no earlier than the eighth century B.C. Also, almost commissioned scribes of the Imperial Dynasty recorded all of the material. Masculist biases abound in these records. The legends and rituals of Japan reveal a connection with the natural environment that may be compared to the Tao of China or Mother Earth of the Native Americans.

Chapter 106, Fuji

Chapter 106, Fuji Summary and Analysis

Fuji is the goddess of fire. She is worshipped by the Ainu, the native inhabitants of Japan. Some say that she descended from the heavens as Turesh, the first woman of the world. She brought existence to the world and the knowledge of fire. She is the one mighty ancestress of the Ainu people. She lives as Mother Bear in the heavens, the guiding light where souls may rest before returning to earth.



Chapter 107, Izanami

Chapter 107, Izanami Summary and Analysis

Izanami was among the eight pairs of deities that arrived at the beginning of time. She is credited with the formation of land and life. She decides to take her brother Izanagi as her mate and approaches him and speaks of her desire. An ugly child, the Water Serpent Yebisu, is born from this union. He is sent off in the Boat of Heaven. The scribes of Emperor Temmu of Yamato claim that the tragic birth was caused by Izanami's disregard for courtly etiquette. It is the male that must speak first and the female should only respond in compliance. Izanami and Izanagi mate once more, but this time it is Izanagi who speaks of his desire and Izanami echoes his words. The islands of Japan result from this union. She also produces the sun, the moon, the sea, the rivers, the mountains and the trees.

She brings 32 beings filled with the sacred kami spirit into existence. As Izanami is giving birth to her 33rd child, he scorches her womb with his kami of fire. She is so badly burned that Izanami is forced to retire to Yomi, the Land of the Dead. Izanagi decides to visit his sister and wife, despite her protests. He is repulsed by the sight of the dead Izanami and flees in horror. The Shikome, the angry spirits of Yomi, are sent after Izanagi. He escapes and rolls a great boulder between Yomi and the land of the living. He speaks the words of divorce to his wife from behind the great boulder.



Chapter 108, Amaterasu Omikami

Chapter 108, Amaterasu Omikami Summary and Analysis

The timing of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu's birth is not quite clear. Some say that she was born from the left eye of Izanagi after Izanami died. Others say that Izanami gave birth to the sun and the moon before the water serpent. Her brother is Susanowo, God of the sea. He is jealous of her greater power and plans to challenge her. Amaterasu learns of her brother's plans and prepares her defense. When Susanowo arrives he denies any intent to harm his sister and even offers to mate with her as a sign of his good will. Three daughters are born from this union. It is not long before Susanowo is back to his scheming. He blocks the irrigation canals, stomps on every rice plant, and smears the celestial weaving house with excrement. Amaterasu overlooks these offenses, passing them off as a drunken rage. Susanowo next murders a colt and heaves its body into heaven, destroying the looms and killing several of the weavers.

Amaterasu is enraged by her brother's actions, but she does not attack him. Instead, she withholds her warmth and light from the world. She closes herself into the Cave of Heaven, the Ama No Iwayato. Without sunlight, life is impossible. The deities decide that Susanowo must be punished and banished from heaven. To give this news to Amaterasu the deities must first lure her out of her cave. The Goddess Ama No Uzume dances at the mouth of the cave causing the other deities to laugh. Amaterasu is curious about the sounds of joy coming from outside her cave, so she peeks out. She finds herself facing the sacred mirror of eight hands. She sees her brilliant, beautiful image and steps out of the cave to take a closer look. The deities quickly close the cave door behind her and she resumes her place in heaven. The Most Sacred Mirror now hangs in the Ise Shrine of Amaterasu Omikami, holiest Shinto shrine in all Japan.



Chapter 109, Ukemochi

Chapter 109, Ukemochi Summary and Analysis

Ukemochi is associated with all forms of food. She gives the people rice, fish and animals. The day comes when the moon god Tsuki Yomi, Amaterasu's brother, is sent to serve within her heavenly palace. He is to help her feed the people of Japan. Ukemochi greets her new assistant with a great feast, which he refuses. He then draws his sword and murders the benevolent Goddess, but even in death Ukemochi's body provides food for the people of Japan. Amaterasu, furious with her brother, banishes Tsuki Yomi from the heavens. His light dims with the dishonor of his actions and he dares not show his face when his sister is awake.



Chapter 110, Yakami

Chapter 110, Yakami Summary and Analysis

Yakami is a heroine of Buddhist legend. She spends her childhood diving for oysters in the sea. News comes one day that her parents have been imprisoned on a far off island, for speaking out against those in power. Yakami asks every fisherman to take her to find her parents, but all refuse her out of fear for their own lives. Yakami steals a boat at night and slips out to sea undetected. Yakami arrives on an island, but the people will not help her. She notices a holy shrine at the top of a hill. Yakami climbs the hill and falls asleep beneath a tree. When she wakes she sees a priestess about to push a young girl from the cliff into the sea. The girl is to be a sacrifice to the dragon of the sea. Yakami offers to take the girl's place. Yakami slips her diving dagger between her teeth as she plunges into the water. She dives to the ocean floor and finds the entrance to the dragon's cave. She kills the dragon and returns to the water's surface. The island soon rejoices at the news of Yakami's courage. The news is spread quickly to other islands until the officials of a prison hear of the brave deed. Orders are given for the release of Yakami's parents out of gratitude for what she had done.



Chapter 111, In the Land of Elves and Giants—Scandinavia

Chapter 111, In the Land of Elves and Giants—Scandinavia Summary and Analysis

Scandinavia is another example of a region comprised of two major groups. The Finns were a Mongolian, Ural-Altaic speaking people while the northern Germanic groups, such as the Norse, the Danes, and the Swedes, pressed further and further into central Europe. The Finns retreated even further north as a result. The people of the Germanic groups were generally tall, blonde and blue-eyed. Accounts of "small dark elves and dwarves" may actually be a reaction of the Germanic people to the Finnish people. An important aspect of Scandinavian Goddess lore is the fact that many of the deities come directly from Anatolia. The Scandinavian Goddess tales provide images of women as Divine Mother, as Queen of the Witches, and Queen of the Elves.



Chapter 112, Ilmatar

Chapter 112, Ilmatar Summary and Analysis

Ilmatar literally means *Sky Mother*, yet she is usually referred to as Water Mother. She descends into the never-ending ocean. She floats for centuries before she starts to feel lonely, wondering if it was a mistake to leave her home. A duck flies over her, searching for a place to rest. Ilmatar lifts her knee out of the water and creates the first hill of land. The duck builds her nest on Ilmatar's knee and lays six golden eggs and one made of iron. Ilmatar is not able to hold her knee still for long, and as she shifts to find comfort, the eggs spill into the water and shatter. The lower pieces of the eggs form the earth. The upper pieces form the arch of heaven. The yolk becomes the sun, the white becomes the moon, and the speckles of the eggs form the stars.

Ilmatar feels peaceful now. She floats for ten more years and when she lifts her head from the water Creation begins. She sculpts the land with her fingers and toes, creating caves and fjords. She creates pillars to hold the sky in place. Lastly, she creates people on the rocky cliffs.



Chapter 113, Freyja

Chapter 113, Freyja Summary and Analysis

Freyja is one of the most popular Scandinavian Goddesses. She was known as Queen or Mother Goddess of the Vanir deities. She was Goddess of love, beauty, sex and attraction. She was also the Goddess of war, death, magic, prophecies and wealth. Freyja aids those in need. She helps the simpleminded Ottar to learn his ancestry, remember it, and keep his land as a result.

One day Freyja wanders into the forest of Svart Alfaheim, the Land of the Dark Elves. She sees four little men crafting a beautiful necklace, the magic Brisingamen. When the work on the necklace is complete she offers to trade silver and gold for it but the little men refuse. Instead, they ask for a night of love each. Freyja spends four nights in Svart Alfaheim and is so pleased she almost forgets the necklace. The little men are true to their word and on the fifth morning they lead her out of the forest and present her with the necklace. From around Freyja's neck, the necklace shone with a brilliant light. It creates the morning star and brings the knowledge of molding softened gold.



Chapter 114, Nerthus and Urth (The Norns)

Chapter 114, Nerthus and Urth (The Norns) Summary and Analysis

The accounts of Nerthus and those of Urth are separated by 12 centuries. Stone combines their stories because their accounts are often compared to one another.

Nerthus is the Mother of the Northern Earth. Each year, she emerges and is drawn through the streets by the sacred cows. The people hide all weaponry hoping she brings prosperity and peace. At the end of the procession she is bathed in a secluded lake. Those who bathe her die in the water.

Urth lives with her sisters. Together they are the Norns. Urth has knowledge of the past, Skuld has knowledge of the future, and Verthandi has knowledge of all that is now. They live beside a root of the Yggdrasil, the World Tree. They appear at every birth assigning a thread to each infant. For they weave the tapestry of fates. Each life is a string on their loom, and the length of the string tells the length of the life.



Chapter 115, Iduna

Chapter 115, Iduna Summary and Analysis

Iduna is the keeper of the golden apples of immortality. She provides the deities of Asgard with her apples so that each may become as youthful as she is. Thiassi of snowy Thrymheim, where all is cold and dead, is envious of the deities for receiving the gift of eternal springtime. He enlists the help of Loki and captures Iduna. Without Iduna, the deities grow old. They ask Frigga to help them find Iduna. Frigga discovers Iduna's location. She orders Loki to rescue Iduna and return her to Asgard. Loki dresses in Feyja's falcon coat, finds Iduna alone, and snatches her up with his beak. Thiassi with his chases after Iduna, but as he nears Asgard the deities light a fire on the mountaintop. Thiassi's wings come too close to the fires and he is engulfed in flames.

Chapter 116, Mielikki

Chapter 116, Mielikki Summary and Analysis

Mielikki is the Goddess of the Forest. She is protector of the animals and Goddess of the Hunt, much like the Greek Goddess Artemis.

Chapter 117, Frigga

Chapter 117, Frigga Summary and Analysis

Frigga and Freyja are often thought to be the same Goddess image, but they are indeed separate. The death of Frigga's son, Balder, has been compared to the many tales of the dying sons and lovers of the Near East Goddesses. Frigga, Queen Mother of the Aesir, spins the golden thread of fate and weaves the design of past, present, and future. She lives at the Castle Fensalir surrounded by her holy women.

Frigga learns that Hella, Queen of Nifhelheim, desires her son Balder. Frigga begs all living things on earth to spare his life. She neglects to ask the mistletoe. The evil Loki tricks Balder's blind brother into shooting a mistletoe dart into Balder's chest. Thus Balder dies and is sent to Hella's domain. Frigga asks for Hella's compassion and the return of her son. Hella agrees to return Balder if all living things will weep just as Frigga weeps. All creatures agree to mourn Balder, except for Loki who is disguised as the Giant Woman Thiokk. Instead of weeping, Loki laughs. Balder must remain with Hella.

In addition to mourning her son, Frigga is unhappy in her marriage. Her husband, Odin, steals her necklace, the Brisingamen, and places it on a statue of his own image. Odin casts a spell on the statue so that it will name anyone who tries to take the necklace. Fulla, Frigga's assistant, arranges for an elf to knock the statue over. The statue shatters and Fulla is able to retrieve the necklace for Frigga.



Chapter 118, Skadi

Chapter 118, Skadi Summary and Analysis

Skadi is the Goddess of Winter. Her name means *dark one*, but she is always depicted as wearing robes of white fur. Accounts of Skadi were incorporated into the story *The Snow Queen* by Hans Christian Andersen.

Skadi goes to Asgard when she hears of her father Thiassi's death. She demands a life for a life, but the deities offer her a husband instead. They also insist that she must choose her husband blindly. A blindfold is placed over her eyes so that she can only see the ankles of the men. She chooses Njord of the foggy seacoast. When it is time to leave Asgard, the two fight over where they will live. The decision is made that they will split their time between both homes. One of the pair is always saddened by the surroundings. Skadi finally decides that they must part. Some claim that the parting was amicable, while others say that Skadi flew into a rage smashing their marriage bed and strapping boards on her feet, thus inventing the first skis.



Chapter 119, Hella

Chapter 119, Hella Summary and Analysis

Hella is the Goddess who rules Nifhelheim, the land of the dead. She protects all souls and spirits of the forest. There is a clear connection with the German Goddess Holla who is the Queen of the Elves or Queen of the Witches.

Holla, Mistress of the Witches, rides through the forest blessing those that are righteous and laying spells upon wrongdoers. She makes the hellebore herb grow so that it may be used in her cauldron to raise the dead souls on the hallowed day in autumn.

Hella is depicted as being alive on one side of her body, while the other side is blue and corpselike. Her domain, Nifhelheim, is made up of nine regions. The righteous souls rest in fields of bliss. The evil souls reside in "caves of icy streams of venom." The worst souls have their bones washed in the cauldron of Hvergelmir. The bones are then fed to the serpent Nihogge while their flesh and blood is fed to the hounds.



Chapter 120, The Primeval Prophetess— Greece, Crete, and the Aegean

Chapter 120, The Primeval Prophetess—Greece, Crete, and the Aegean Summary and Analysis

The images and legends of Greek Goddesses are far more familiar than those of the rest of the world. It is important to understand that the Goddesses of ancient Greece were influenced by those of Anatolia, Crete, Cyprus, Canaan and Egypt. In studying these Goddesses, it can be seen that over a period of time, divine attributes were often incorporated under various names. Sometimes the aspects were enhanced and other times they were scaled back. Despite Greece's inability as a nation to form a centralized theology, the culture has served as the backbone for western civilization.



Chapter 121, Nikta (Night)

Chapter 121, Nikta (Night) Summary and Analysis

Nikta's powers are greater than those of all other deities—she is Night. She gave birth to day and all airy space. She produced the Sister Gorgons: Sthenno, Eurydale, and Medusa. She brought forth those who guard the golden apple tree, the Sister Hesperides: Aigle, Erytheia, and Arethusa. She also gave birth to the Sister Fates: Klotho, Lachesis, and Atropos.

In her nest, protected from the wind by her black wings, she brings forth the Egg from which Eros, Erotic love, hatches so that the race of mortals might begin.



Chapter 122, Gaia (Ge)

Chapter 122, Gaia (Ge) Summary and Analysis

Gaia is the Creator, the Earth, and Goddess.

Gaia creates heaven and calls him Uranus. She takes him as a lover and gives birth to the other deities of heaven. She creates the sea, naming him Pontus, and takes him as a lover. She gives birth to the deities of the sea. It is said that Gaia is the grandmother of Zeus. Many of her shrines have been given over to Zeus. He usurped her at Olympia, renaming it as Olympus. Gaia is still best known at Delphi, at least secretly.

Although Apollo claimed the shrine as his own and instructed the priestesses to ignore the word of Gaia, she is still known there. It is Gaia's voice that seeps as gases from the earth revealing prophecies to the priestesses. Many have written about how the temple at Delphi changed hands from Gaia to Apollo. Whether it was a gift or taken by force, it is said that Apollo attempts to heal his guilt, purifying himself by working as a shepherd.



Chapter 123, Themis and Dike

Chapter 123, Themis and Dike Summary and Analysis

Both Themis and Dike are Justice. Themis is Gaia's daughter. She holds the Scales of Justice and was once known as Metis, and was the first bride of Zeus. He tired of her wisdom and good counsel so he swallowed her. She is now known as Themis and is briefly spoken of as Zeus's second wife, but the Greeks eventually abandon this idea recognizing that her strength and independent voice are not good qualities in an Achaean wife.

Themis is credited with giving birth to the Horae, the Seasons: Eunomia, Eirene, and Dike. It is also said that she (not Nikta) who gave birth to the Fates. Themis sits on Mount Olympus and announces the meetings of the deities. She acts as a mediator for discussions and the deities listen to her wisdom. Some say that Themis and Dike sit side by side in the heavens. Themis holds her "starry Scales of Justice" and watches over the world and Dike shines as the stars of Virgo.



Chapter 124, Demeter and Kore (Persephone)

Chapter 124, Demeter and Kore (Persephone) Summary and Analysis

Demeter is known as the Goddess of Agriculture. Her daughter, Kore, is captured by Aidoneus Hades and taken to the Land of the Dead. Kore is forced to become the wife of Aidoneus Hades. She is now known as Persephone, Queen of the Land of the Dead. Demeter mourns the loss of her daughter. She searches for nine days. When Demeter learns of Kore's whereabouts, rage replaces sorrow. She withholds the rain, creating a drought. The deities of Olympus inform Aidoneus Hades that he must let Kore return to her mother. The mother and daughter are reunited once again, but the reunion does not last, for Kore ate the pomegranate seeds and must return to the Land of the Dead. Each year, she must spend one month for every seed that she ate in the Land of the Dead. It is known that the Eleusian Mysteries tell the story of Demeter and Kore's separation and reunion, but the rest of the secrets are still unknown—a mystery.



Chapter 125, Hera

Chapter 125, Hera Summary and Analysis

Hera is most popularly known as the jealous wife of Zeus. Stone feels that this role relegates Hera to a lesser role than what she is entitled to. Some say that Hera is one with Gaia, but others claim that she is Gaia's granddaughter. She is heir to Gaia's tree of golden apples. Hera has given birth to Hephaistos (Hephaestus), Hercales (Hercules), and the twins Ares and Eris. The twins are said to be warlike, perhaps because Hera is often depicted as wearing a helmet and carrying a spear. She is also seen holding a scepter in one hand and a pomegranate in the other, symbolizing that she rules in death as she rules in life.



Chapter 126, Aphrodite

Chapter 126, Aphrodite Summary and Analysis

Aphrodite is initially regarded as a multifaceted Goddess concerned mostly with prophesies and battles. It is the Hellenic Greeks that come to regard Aphrodite as the essence of erotic love. Herodotus writes that Aphrodite was introduced to Greece by the Phoenicians of Canaan. The Greeks referred to the shrines of Ashtart as belonging to Aphrodite. Perhaps it is this connection that caused the shift in Aphrodite's image—because of the sexual rituals associated with Ashtart and Ishtar in Canaan and Babylon. It is interesting to note that the Romans knew Aphrodite as Venus, the sacred star of Ashtart, Ishtar, and Inanna.

Adonis is Aphrodite's son and lover whose life is taken very early. He is wounded by a wild boar, and his blood colors the poppies in the Cyprian Troodos Mountains. Just as in the temples of Ashtart, Ishtar, and Inanna, the priestesses who serve in Aphrodite's temple take lovers from those who come to praise the Goddess.

Chapter 127, Hestia

Chapter 127, Hestia Summary and Analysis

Hestia is the Goddess of the hearth and the eternal city flame. She is sister to Demeter and Hera. Her name is used to seal all oaths. Her memory seems to have been lost from Greece, but the Romans considered her an extremely important deity. She is known as Vesta in Rome. Her Vestal priestesses were called upon on the Palatine Hill in Rome to judge. Their voices spoke only the truth.



Chapter 128, Artemis

Chapter 128, Artemis Summary and Analysis

Artemis is the Goddess of the Hunt as well as protector of the animals. She is a healer and aides in childbirth. She teaches about the medicines of the woods. She is the daughter of Zeus and Lato. There are some who believe that Lato and Artemis are one and the same. Artemis protects girls from the abuses of men, and has helped many women escape violence and rape. She punishes the men that would dare to violate a woman.



Chapter 129, Athena

Chapter 129, Athena Summary and Analysis

In staggered prose, Stone questions the Goddess Athena about her attributes. Because Athena is born full grown from Zeus's head after he swallowed Metis, Stone wonders how a Goddess is formed from an arrogant male mind. She wonders if Athena has any traits of her mother. Similarities between Athena and other Goddesses are highlighted by Stone such as Neit, Hella, Anat and even Gaia. The reader is informed that Athena invented the potter's wheel and the horse bridle. She taught the art of medicine and healing. She carved the first flute and created the first loom. Athena is, after all, the goddess of civilization, wisdom, weaving and war.



Characters

Ishtar

The most popular Goddess among the Semites of northern and central Mesopotamia is Ishtar. She is Queen of Heaven, and it is that she descended from Venus.

Ashtart (Astarte, Ashtoreth)

Ashtart is Queen of Heaven. There are many connections between Ashtart and Ishtar, so many, in fact, that they are quite possibly the same Goddess. There are also those who believe that Ashtart is the same as the Egyptian Goddess Isis, and still others believe that she is the Greek Aphrodite.

Inanna

Inanna is granddaughter to the Sumerian creator Goddess Nammu. She is the most widely known Goddess name among the Sumerians. She is associated with the Semitic goddesses Ishtar and Ashtart, Egyptian Isis, Greek Aphrodite, and the Roman Venus.

Kybele (Cybele)

Kybele is the Mother of Deities, the magna Mater, in Anatolia, and later in Rome. She is also called the Mother Lioness and the Queen Bee. She is similar to the Mesopotamian Goddesses Ishtar and Inanna in that she takes her son as a lover. He dies and sacred rituals mourn and honor his passing.

Athena

Athena is the Greek Goddess of civilization, wisdom, weaving and war. She is possibly manifested in aspects of many other Goddesses from other civilizations such as Hella, Neit, or Anat.

Asherah

Asherah is the Highest Queen, the Holy Mother. She is known to have given birth to the Seventy Deities of Heaven. Asherah is linked to the Goddesses Ishtar, Ashtart, and Atargatis.



Anat

Anat's power is called upon in battle by the Canaanites. She is also referred to as Mother of All Nations; Virgin, yet Progenitor of People; She who kills and makes alive again; and She who makes union upon the earth, spreading love throughout the land.

Allat, Al Uzza, and Manat

Allat, Al Uzza, and Manat are known in Arabia as the holy three. Allat is the primary Goddess of the Arabians. Al Uzza is associated with the planet Venus. Manat decides fortunes and speaks of destiny. She is also the one to decide when it is time for death.

Shakti

Shakti literally means *power*. In the *Tantras* of India she is the One Great Mother; the creator of all existence.

Neit

Neit is the Egyptian Mistress of the Celestial Ocean. She is the mother of Isis and is all that has ever been, is, or shall be.

Au Set (Isis)

Au Set is the Egyptian Perfect Mother. She is the daughter of Neit and sister to Osiris.

Devi (Durga, Parvati, Laksmi, Tara)

Devi is a representation of the all-powerful Shakti. She is called by many names, including: Sita, Radha, Sri, Laksmi, Tara and Kali.

Ua Zit

Ua Zit is the Cobra Goddess of Egypt. She is the Uraeus serpent and is credited with creating the art of writing.

Maat

Maat is referred to as The Eye of Heaven in Egyptian mythology. She is the judge of heaven that each soul must meet upon dying.



Lato (Mother of Artemis)

Lato is the Anatolian name given to the Mother of all Deities, mother of Artemis (and sometimes Apollo). She is known in many other civilizations by other names such as Allat, Ashtart and Ua Zit.

Nu Kwa

Nu Kwa is a Chinese Goddess and is nature in action. Nu Kwa is said to have arranged the patterns of the universe and created the Chinese race. She restores the world to harmony when chaos tears it apart.

The Morrigan

The Morrigan is an extremely aggressive Celtic Goddess. She is said to have a triple nature often taking the images of Macha and Badb. The Morrigan changes shape and form frequently. She speaks in the form of poetry and prophecies.

Freyja

She was known as Queen or Mother Goddess of the Vanir deities. She was Goddess of love, beauty, sex and attraction. She was also the Goddess of war, death, magic, prophecies, and wealth.

Frigga

Frigga is the Queen Mother of the Aesir deities.

Macha

Macha is often presented as one of the three aspects of the Celtic Goddess Morrigan. She embodies the equine aspect of the The Morrigan. There are accounts of Macha appearing as a separate deity. She drove the evil brothers Cimbaeth and Dithorba from their land, along with their sons. She cursed the men of Ulster for their pride.

Coatlicue

Coatlicue is the Mother of all Aztec deities. She gives birth to the sun, moon and stars



Gum Lin

A Chinese story tells of Gum Lin, a young girl who saves her village. She is brave and selfless. Gum Lin accomplishes her mission by cooperating with the daughter of the dragon, Loy Yi Lung.

Kuan Yin

Kuan Yin is a Chinese Goddess. She is thought to be a modern Buddhist version of Nu Kwa. Kuan Yin listens to the people of the earth, and sings to heal their suffering and pain.

Tien Hou

Many Chinese tales tell of Tien Hou, the Protector of the Sea. She is a mortal girl who protects the men at sea. Tien Hou's body enters into a coma, while her spirit rescues those in need.

Loy Yi Lung

A Chinese story tells of Loy Yi Lung, a dragon who cleverly helps trick her father. Her friend, Gum Lin, is desperate to save her drought-stricken village and so Loy Yi Lung devises a plan for the two to outwit her father and steal a magic key.

Hsi Ho

Hsi Ho is a Chinese Goddess and is the mother of the ten suns.

Danu

Danu is the most ancient of Celtic Goddesses.

Odras

Odras is a young man who angers the Celtic Goddess the Morrigan. He uses her sacred bull to mate with his cow. The Morrigan turns him into a lake.

Cu Chulainn

Cu Chulainn is an Irish warrior who spurns the love of the Morrigan. She retaliates by making him look a fool, attacking him and casting dark prophecies.



Cimbaeth

Cimbaeth is an evil king who rules the land with his brother, Dithorba. The brothers are driven from the land by the Irish Goddess Macha.

Dithorba

Dithorba is a cruel king who rules the land with his brother, Cimbaeth. The brothers are driven from the land by the Irish Goddess Macha. Dithorba's five sons challenge Macha's claim to the throne. They are met with her trickery and sorcery, becoming her faithful servants.

Crunchu

Crunchu, a widower, married the Irish Goddess Macha and fathered twins with her. He betrayed Macha with his prideful boasts in the land of Ulster.

Cerridwen

Cerridwen is referred to as a Welsh witch with great wisdom, prophetic foresight, and magical shape shifting abilities.

Gwion

Gwion is entrusted with stirring the elixir for Cerridwen's son, Morfran. Gwion steals the three drops of elixir and inherits the Welsh witch's powers. The angry Cerridwen tosses him into a raging river.

Morgan le Fay

Morgan le Fay is thought to be the same entity as The Lady of the Lake. She resides on Avalon, a mystic island. She is said to have taken King Arthur to Avalon as he was dying.

The Lady of the Lake

The Lady of the Lake is thought to be the same entity as Morgan le Fay. She gave Excalibur to King Arthur and is said to have tricked Merlin into teaching her magic.



Bridget

Bridget is a Celtic Goddess known for her compassion and ability to heal. Evidence of her Christianization can be seen in her canonization as a Catholic saint.

Maeve (Medb)

Maeve appears as both a Goddess and a mortal queen of Ireland. She is depicted as dominating both on the battlefield and in the bedroom.

Rhiannon

Rhiannon lives on the island of the Sidhe folk, the island of the dead. She lulls the living to death, awakens the dead, and heals all sadness and pain through the songs of her three magic birds. She is known to pass her time frolicking in the form of various animals.

Cailleach Bheur

An Irish Goddesses who takes many forms.

Morfran

Morfran is the son of the Welsh witch and Goddess Cerridwen.

Mu Olokukurtilisop

Mu, Giant Blue Butterfly Lady, protects the women of the Cuna tribe of Panama. The Cuna people say that it is Mu Olokukurtilisop that created all that exists.

Akewa

Akewa is the sun to the Toba people of Argentina.

Huitaca

Huitaca is the Moon Goddess of the Chibcha people from Colombia. She encourages her people to enjoy the pleasures in life.



Bochica

Bochica is a teacher of spinning and weaving. He dissuades the Chibcha people of Colombia from enjoying the pleasures in life encouraged by the Moon Goddess Huitaca.

Huitzilpochtli

Huitzilpochtli is Coatlicue's warlike son, also known as Tezcatlipoca.

Coyolxauqui

Coyolxauqui is the fairest daughter of Coatlicue. Her mother refers to her as Golden Bells. After her brother, Huitzilpochtli, murders her, Coatlicue places her head in the heavens to light the night sky.

Xochiquetzal

Xochiquetzal is the daughter of Coatlicue who survived Huitzilpochtli's killing spree. She teaches the Aztecs about the arts, the cycle of life, and of female sensuality.

Malinalxoch

Malinalxoch is the last daughter of Coatlicue. She is so powerful that she is able to tame the wildest animals.

Chicomecoatl

Chicomecoatl is The Great Corn Mother. She watches over the corn harvest of the Aztecs as well as the souls of mothers who died in childbirth.

Teteu Innan

Teteu Innan is the Aztec Goddess of childbirth, healing and prophesy.

Chalchihuilicue

Chalchihuilicue is the Mistress of the Rains and Waters. She floods the land and destroys the people, saving only those with whom she is pleased.



Bachue

The Chibcha of Colombia view Bachue as the Divine Ancestress. She and her son/husband create all life and teach the way of peace.

Mayuel

Mayuel is an Aztec Goddess depicted as having four hundred breasts and having given birth to the four hundred stars. She is credited with having discovered Mescal, the juice of the maguey plant (Tequila).

Ix Chel

Ix Chel is the Mayan Mother of all deities. She is the moon, married to the sun.

Ix Chebel Yax

Ix Chebel Yax is the daughter of Ix Chel. She was born from a spider's web and thus teaches the women of the earth how to spin, weave and dye their cotton.

Iamanja

Iamanja is the Brazilian Goddess of the Sea.

Mami Aruru

The two Akkadian names Mami and Aruru are used interchangeably to refer to the Creator of Life, the Divine Mother of All.

Atargatis

Atargatis is the Semitic Goddess of the Sea.

Shammuramat

Shammuramat is the daughter of Atargatis. She builds a temple to her mother at Ascalon.



Tiamat

Tiamat is the Mesopotamian Mother of all Mothers. She is associated with, or the same as Nammu, Asherah, Atargatis, and Nuneit—Mother Goddess Sea.

Hokhma

Hokhma is Wisdom. Wisdom is personified as female. She is said to work with God, yet she is also said to be the Holy Spirit.

Lilith

Lilith, a Sumerian Goddess, is associated with Inanna and Ninlil. She is eventually downgraded in Sumerian texts as a night demon.

Gilgamish

Gilgamish appears in several Goddess tales of the Near East. He refuses to lay with Ishtar and attacks her temple, forever changing the ritual to honor Tammuz. He is also said to have cut down a sacred huluppu tree, causing Lilith to flee her home.

The Shekhina

The Shekhina is from Hebrew lore and is associated with the Sabbath.

Mawu

Mawu is the omnipotent creator of life according to the Dahomey people of western Africa.

Gbadu

Gbadu is the first daughter of the African Goddess Mawu. She watches over the earth and all of her mother's creations.

Minona

Minona is the oldest daughter of Gbadu and granddaughter to the African Goddess Mawu. Minona is asked to teach the people of the earth how to read the omens in palm kernels. She is charged with making known Mawu's word so that the people may be wise once again.



Awe

Awe is a boastful man who challenges the African Goddess Mawu. He knows the ways of miracles and magic and claims that he is as powerful as the great Mawu.

Ala

The Ibo people of Nigeria view the Goddess Ala as the one who brings life, but also takes it. She is the proclaimer of the laws that govern human morality.

Jezanna

Jezanna is The Moon to the Mashona people of Zimbabwe.

Notambu

Notambu is the earthly representative of Jezanna to the Mashona people of Zimbabwe. She is High Priestess and leads the rituals and ceremonies honoring Jezanna.

Songji

Songji is The Mother to the Bantu people of central and southern Africa. She calls protects and provides for the women.

Nsomeka

Nsomeka, a young girl with a good heart, is called upon by Songji, The Mother of the Bantu people. She must file down the teeth of the women in her village so that they are marked with the sign of Songji's protection.

Mboze

Mboze is considered to be the First Mother by the Woyo people of Zaire.

Bunzi

Bunzi is the sacred serpent daughter of the Goddess Mboze. She is the Rain Goddess.



Mbaba Mwana Waresa

Mbaba Mwana Waresa is the Holy Rain Goddess of the Zulu people of Natal. She chooses a mortal man as her husband.

Mella

A Zimbabwean tale tells of the courageous deeds of the young heroine, Mella. Mella overcomes her fears of the Python Healer in an effort to save her dying father.

The Python Healer

The Python is a frightful serpent who helps heal the father of a brave young girl name Mella. He cares for those who fill their lives with courage, honesty, and love.

Pele

Pele is the Goddess whose spirit lives within Mt. Kilauea on Hawaii. She causes volcanic eruptions when displeased by what she sees around her or when she is denied the objects of her desire—young handsome chiefs.

Mahuea

The Maori people of New Zealand revere Mahuea as the Goddess who first discovered fire.

Hina

The Maori people of New Zealand know Hina as the daughter of Mahuea. The people of Hawaii and other Polynesian islands also know her as Hina of the Moon.

Kunapipi

Kunapipi is revered as The First Mother in the Arnhemland area of north-central Australia.

Fire Woman

Fire Woman is recognized by the Sea Dyak culture in Southern Borneo as the discoverer of fire.



Star Girl

The people of the Nullarbor Plain of south-central Australia speak of a mortal girl who created the stars. Star Girl tosses a handful of glowing embers from a fire into the heavens, and there they remain as stars.

Lia

Lia is a Goddess who descends to the earth to help the Goanna women of Australia find water.

Arunta Sun Woman

The Arunta people of central Australia assign a feminine image to the sun—the Sun Woman.

Sun Goddess of Arinna

The Sun Goddess of Arinna is the greatest of the deities. She controls all leadership on earth and in heaven.

Hanna Hanna

Hanna Hanna is the Holy Grandmother who brought all life according to a Hattian group called the Gulsas.

Zaskhapuna

Zaskhapuna is a God who has been charged with the task of bringing the rains to the earth by the Holy Grandmother Hanna Hanna. He passes his duties along to his son, Telipinu, and causes a great drought.

Great Grandmother of Anatolia

Stone has given this name to the nameless Goddess of Anatolia

Hepat

Hepat is possible the same deity as the Sun Goddess of Arinna.



Hecate

It is possible that Hecate is another aspect of Isis or possibly Artemis. She is the Goddess of witches and magic.

Anahita

Anahita is the Iranian aspect of the main Goddess, the creator of life and ruler of all.

Kali

Kali is another aspect of the Goddess Devi. Her name literally means *time*. She is the essence of Night, called Sleep and Dream.

Anasuya

Anasuya is a mortal woman who is attacked by the Gods Shiva, Brahma, and Vishnu. She scorns the Gods and explains their true relationship to all women.

Sarasvati

Sarasvati is the Indian Goddess of the arts, particularly writing.

The Goddesses of Assam

The Khasi people of Assam, India tell tales of Mother Earth and her three daughters; Goddess Ka Sngi of the sun, Goddess Ka Um of the water, and Goddess Ka Ding of the fire.

Rangada

Rangada is a mortal woman huntress and village leader. She disguises herself as Malha and falls in love with Arjuna, temporarily leaving her village for a life of peaceful bliss.

Ushas

Ushas is the Indian Goddess of dawn. Her image may be regarded as the same as Eos of Greece and Aurora of Rome.



Nammu

Nammu is the mother who gives birth to the heaven and earth and all deities.

Nidaba

Nidaba is regarded as the Sumerian Goddess of writing. She is also credited with writing the sacred laws of Lagash.

Ereshkigal

Ereshkigal is the Goddess who reigns over Irkalla, the Land of the Dead.

The Lady of the Amenta

The Lady of the Amenta greets the souls who are light enough to enter into heaven.

Seshat

Seshat is the Goddess of Writing and the Ruler of Books. She is also the scribe who writes the deeds of the dead on the Tree of Life.

Hathor

Hathor is the Great Mother of Heaven. She is the cow of the heavens that provides the milk of life. She is the Goddess of Motherhood and Fertility.

Spider Woman

Spider Woman is known as Creator to the Pueblo people of southwest North America.

Huruing Wuhti

The Two Mothers Huruing and Wuhti are the creators of the earth and the Hopi people of North America.

Changing Woman

Changing Woman is the Navajo concept of the processes of Nature. She is the creator of the Navajo people and the Mother Earth who is the seasons.



White Shell Woman

White Shell Woman is the Navajo deity who created the sun.

Asintmah

The Athapascan people of western Canada believe that Asintmah was the first woman on Mother Earth. She aids the Earth in her birth of all living creatures.

Awehai

Awehai is the creator of the Earth and mother of the Iroquois people.

Somagalags

It is possible that Somagalags is considered the Mother Earth by the Bella Coola people of coastal British Columbia.

Queskapenek

Queskapenek is a mortal woman who gives birth to her children along the banks of the Okanagan River. The Salish tribe provides the tale of this woman as an explanation for the fertile soils in the Okanagan Valley in southern British Columbia.

Spider Grandmother

In the Kiowa legend, Spider Grandmother finds and provides light for the world. She also gives the gift of fire to her people.

Sun Sister

In an Eskimo tale, Sister becomes the sun after she is assaulted by Brother.

Pohaha

The Pueblo legend of Pohaha is based on an actual woman from the Cottonwood Clan. She is a brave leader and defender of her people. She is the recipient of the Mask of Valor.



Pasowee, the Buffalo Woman

The Kiowa legend of Pasowee tells of how she taught her people all the secrets of the buffalo.

Wild Pony

Wild Pony is the First Mother in a legend told by the Jicarilla Apache people.

Fuji

Fuji is the Goddess of Fire, the one mighty Ancestress of the Ainu people.

Izanami

Izanami is the Japanese Goddess of creation and death.

Amaterasu Omikami

Amaterasu is the Goddess of the Sun. She is the Divine Ancestress from whom all rulers were born.

Ukemochi

Ukemochi is the Goddess of all food. She is murdered by the God of the moon, Tsuki Yomi.

Tsuki Yomi

Tsuki Yomi is the God of the Moon, brother to Amaterasu. After murdering Ukemochi he is banished from heaven.

Yakami

Yakami is a brave young girl who set out to find her imprisoned parents. Along the way, she slays an evil dragon.

Ilmatar

Ilmatar is known as the Water Mother. She is the Finnish creator of the world.



Nerthus

Nerthus is the Mother of the Northern Earth.

The Norns

The Norns are three sisters who know all. Urth has knowledge of the past, Skuld has knowledge of the future, and Verthandi has knowledge of all that is now.

Iduna

Iduna is the keeper of the golden apples of immortality. She is youth and springtime.

Mielikki

Mielikki is the Goddess of the Forest. She is protector of the animals and Goddess of the Hunt.

Skadi

Skadi is the daughter of Thiassi. She is the Goddess of Winter.

Hella

Hella is the Goddess who rules Nifhelheim, the land of the dead.

Nikta

Nikta is Night. Her powers are greater than those of all other deities. She gave birth to day and all airy space.

Gaia (Ge)

Gaia is Goddess of Greece. She is Creator of all. She is the Earth.

Themis

Themis holds the Scales of Justice. She is the Greek embodiment of divine order.



Demeter

Demeter is the Greek Goddess of Agriculture. Her daughter is taken from her by Aidoneus Hades and forced to live in the Land of the Dead.

Kore (Persephone)

Kore is the daughter of Demeter. She is captured by Aidoneus Hades and forced to become his wife. She is known as Persephone, Queen of the Land of the Dead.

Hera

Hera is the Goddess of Marriage, best known as the wife of Zeus.

Aphrodite

Aphrodite is initially regarded as a multifaceted Goddess concerned mostly with prophesies and battles. It is the Hellenic Greeks that come to regard Aphrodite as the essence of erotic love.

Hestia

Hestia is the Goddess of the hearth and the eternal city flame.

Artemis

Artemis is the Goddess of the Hunt as well as protector of the animals. She is a healer and aides in childbirth.



Objects/Places

Key (Gum Lin and Loy Yi Lung)

Gum Lin must find the key that will open the stone gates to a hidden mountain lake. The lake will provide water to her drought-stricken village. The key is guarded by an angry dragon and it appears to Gum Lin only after she has proven her good-heartedness. It is sitting in a bed of pearls within a small ivory box. The golden, glowing key is adorned with a swan at the top.

Fu Sang Tree (His Ho)

This tree is thought to be the mulberry tree. It is the tree in which Hsi Ho places her suns to dry.

Aven (Cerridwen)

Cerridwen's cauldron, also known as the Cauldron of the Deep, in which she prepares the three drops of liquid that, will provide her son, Morfran, foresight and magical powers. Gwion tends to the cauldron and eventually steals the three drops.

Excalibur (Morgan le Fay)

Excalibur is the sword given to King Arthur by The Lady of the Lake. It is said that Morgan le Fay forged the sword in Avalon.

Sekpoli (Mawu)

The Dahomey people of western Africa regard the Sekpoli as the human soul. Mawu, Mother of All, breathes the soul into everyone. The Dahomey people believe that every person has a piece of Mawu living within their Sekpoli.

Mbari

The Igbo people of Nigeria build a Mbari in the village to honor the Goddess Ala. The Mbari is a small house built of wood. A life-size image of Ala is crafted and is placed on the porch of the Mbari.



The One Hundred Me's (Inanna)

The Me's are the "gifts of culture." Enki is the keeper of the Me's. He accidentally gives them to Inanna after he has had too much to drink.

Kami (Izanami)

Kami is a concept mostly associated with the Zen Buddhists of Japan. It is the "spirit or spiritual essence" found in nature. The recognition of the kami in nature allows for a clearer understanding of the world.

Tree of Life

The Tree of Life appears in several Goddess accounts. The Tree of Life that appears in Sumerian legend contains the deeds of all humankind. Nidaba appointed her scribe, Belit Sheri, to record the deeds of all who live upon the leaves of the tree. The Egyptian Tree of Life is very similar to that of Sumer. It grows in the Hall of Double Maat. The scribe Seshat records Maat's judgments of each life on the leaves of the tree.

Sirius

Several Goddesses are associated with Sirius: Isis, Ua Zit, Allat, and Hecate. Sirius is the brightest star in the night sky and is part of the dog constellation Canis Major.



Themes

Mother and Child

The image of motherhood runs deep throughout this book. The most powerful mother-child relationship is that of Ishtar and Tammuz. Their story is manifest in many Goddess legends: Ashtart and Tammuz, Inanna and Damuzi, Kybele and Attis, Frigga and Balder, and Aphrodite and Adonis. While the idea of a mother taking her son as a lover is strange and repulsive to the western world, the idea of loss is much more tangible. The pain that a mother feels when she loses a child must seem unbearable. It is not hard to believe that a mother will do whatever it takes to keep the memory of her child alive.

The Mother-Child relationship is also presented over and over again in the concept of Mother Earth or Mother Nature. The "child" in this pairing is humankind. While the Mother has provided life, her modern children have not respected her. This is an offense that must generate great heartache, yet she continues to provide and care for her offspring.

Birds

Birds play an assistive role in many of the Goddess legends. Kuan Yin is assisted in her chores by a peacock. Gum Lin receives help from a swan, three brightly colored birds, and a peacock. Maeve in mortal form as queen of Ireland had two golden birds on her shoulders that whispered words of wisdom. It is possible that the presentation of "nurturing" birds relates back to the theme of Mother and Child. The bird is perhaps associated with feminine traits because it is typically the female bird that must nurture and incubate her eggs.

The images of birds are regal and divine in the Goddess stories. Tien Hou flies down from the heavens "as if she had the wings of a great bird." The Morrigan as Badb is known as the Raven of Death. Cailleach Bheur flies in the form of an eagle or black cormorant. Ishtar is sometimes depicted riding upon the back of a large bird. Maat judges the weight of a heart against that of an ostrich feather. If a bird is considered sacred or divine, then it follows suit that an egg is also holy.

Egg imagery can be found in several Goddess tales. The Egyptians believed that the universe was created from a great Cosmic Egg. It is interesting to note that the Egyptian symbol for soul, Ba, is almost identical to that of ostrich. The story of creation by Ilmatar involves the six golden eggs and one iron egg. When the eggs fall and shatter, the earth and heavens are created. The divine imagery of birds developed quite possibly because they are the only creatures able to come so close to heaven.



Water

There is a great connection between Goddesses and water. Celtic Goddesses were almost all associated with bodies of water. Many Goddess rituals involve the bathing of the Goddess image. There are a tremendous number of Goddesses that are entrusted with the ocean or rain, quite possibly outnumbered only by those in charge of fertility. The relationship with water is probably best encapsulated by the Taoist concept of yin and yang. Yin is the feminine aspect of the duality. Unlike the male counterpart, yin is said to be constantly flowing, like water.

Style

Perspective

Merlin Stone has served on the faculty at the State University of New York at Buffalo, where she taught art history and sculpture. She is the author of several works on goddess history. Stone feels that the world's major religions are "controlled by men." She also believes that women are lacking in positive female role models. Thus, her first goal in writing this book is to empower women by sharing her vast knowledge of Goddess reverence. Stone asserts that sexism and racism are two sides of the same coin. Her second goal in writing this book is to combat racism, by helping women to realize the global nature of Goddess reverence.

It is Stone's hope that in becoming familiar with the images of womanhood, a realization can be made as to why and how they were erased and/or degraded by male worshipping groups. Stone has aspirations that women will gather spiritual wisdom from these works. An expectant result of this growing spiritual wisdom is that nature will once again come to be regarded as sacred.

Tone

Stone is very passionate about her studies. She is optimistic that her book will in fact change the world. She freely admits that she is unable to remain objective about her subject matter. It is possible that Christians and men in general might find the book both offensive and accusatory.

Structure

Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood begins with two prefaces and an introduction. The book is broken into 14 sections, each section featuring a different world region. Each section begins with an introduction and a historical account of the featured region. The abundance of historical data can be overwhelming and tedious at times. A chronological presentation may have been more successful than the regional presentation.

The regional sections are broken into an average of eight subsections dedicated to specific Goddesses. Each Goddess subsection begins with another introduction and more historical data. The information provided within this introductory paragraph provides some interesting points, but is most often repetitive. Following the introductory paragraph of the Goddess subsection is the actual Goddess account. The accounts range in length and are written in a variety of styles. Some accounts are essay-like, while some are full of imagery, creating a story-like feel. Still others are written as staggered prose or free verse poetry. The varied styles makes the book feel disjointed at times.

The book contains a 17-page bibliography. There are two appendix-like sections after the bibliography: "Rituals and Commemorations" and "Astrological Considerations."



Quotes

"It seems to me that the human race has grown continually in an evolution of our loyalties—from linking our personal identity first to a familial clan, then to a tribe, then to a village, and so on, to a city, to a state, to a nation, on to a global sense of identity with all peoples on earth." Preface to the New Edition: Some New Mirrors, p. xviii

"One cannot help but wonder, if polluting the environment was to be regarded as blasphemous to our deepest religious beliefs, and if our religious values were truly in focus with natural life and existence, such beliefs and attitudes might help to ensure the very survival of life upon this planet." Introduction, p. 18

"Holy Mother of Compassion who achieved ultimate enlightenment, yet chose to return to us when we called in times of trouble, though we are grown, to Her we turn in our moments of deepest need, and she heeds our childlike calls for help—the Merciful Mother, Most Holy Kuan Yin." Kuan Yin, p. 29

"Nature, since it has mothered all, may be regarded as Mother Nature." Mother Nature, p. 34

"Thus She cursed them for their pride and for the cold blood in their hearts and warned them that misery and suffering as painful as the labour of childbirth was to be Her punishment of Ulster for nine times nine generations." Macha, p. 57

"...Maeve assured them of Her mother strength by saying, 'I can best thirty men a day—on the battlefield or on the bed.'" Maeve, p. 69

"From Xochiquetzal they learned the message of the marigold, the petalled book of the cycles of life, of seed to leafy stem, of leafy stem to bud, of bud to flower fully open to the sun, of flower to drying petals that housed the womb pocket of new seeds, seeds that would take root in the earth and grow again." Coatlique, p. 84

"Wisdom, She who knows all, shining bright and never fading, is recognized by all who love Her, quick to make Herself known to any who seek to find Her, for She is often seated upon the doorstep, just waiting to be invited in." Hokhma, p. 125

"Remind them of the Sekpoli, that essence of life that is the gift of Mawu—so that to fight with another is to fight with another part of Mawu." Mawu, p. 138

"Luminous with energy, magnificent in Her brilliance, it can be no one but Devi! If she were to close Her eyes for an instant, the entire cosmos would disappear." Devi, p. 218

"When on my bed he has shown his love,

when he has given pleasure to my loins,

when I have given pleasure to his,



then shall I show my kindness to Damuzi,
then shall I arrange his destiny,
only then shall I appoint him to be shepherd
of the flocks of my land." Inanna, p. 244

"Heavy is the heart
that has not given bread to the hungry,
that has not given water to the thirsty,
that has not given clothing to the naked,
that has not given a boat to the shipwrecked.

Light is the heart
that has lived a life of good deeds,
as it lies in the bowl of the balance
in the Hall of Double Maat
where Maat announced the judgment
to be recorded on the leaves
of the Tree of Life." Maat, p. 264



Topics for Discussion

Can Judeo-Christian ideals coexist with any form of Goddess reverence? Why or why not?

There is a strong link between Goddess reverence and the sanctity of nature. Why has the concept of Mother Nature survived in societies that reject Goddess reverence and so called "nature religions?"

In her introduction to the China section, Stone suggests that ancient problems are not so different from modern problems. She states that there is a constant "struggle to preserve natural life on the planet as modern technology threatens to destroy it." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

In the introduction to the Mawu section, Stone expresses her opinion that pregnancy and birth are trivialized by modern society. She suggests that the advancement of science, specifically in-vitro fertilization, is a male attempt to control the one thing that they cannot. Do you agree or disagree?

Most ancient civilizations viewed the moon as a feminine entity and the sun as male. There are a few accounts where the sun is actually viewed as feminine: Akewa of the Toba of Argentina, Sun Sister of the Inuit, Amaterasu of Japan, Allat of the Arabians, and the Sun goddess of the Arinna in Anatolia, and Arunta Sun Woman of the Arunta of Australia. Why do you suppose these communities differed in their views of the sun?

Throughout the book, Stone points out that the current knowledge of Goddesses is tainted by biased men and the major religions. How and why has such a widespread suppression of women occurred?

In the book's introduction, Stone points out that the Goddess accounts are classified as "mythology," rather than sacred or religious scripture. Why do you think that is so?

If you were to write your own Goddess legend for the modern world, what and who would your Goddess protect? What causes would she stand-up for? Which ancient Goddesses would you draw upon in the creation of your new Goddess? Why?