Garden of Eden – Genesis chapters 1 - 4

“Eye Juggling” for the embedded Symbols and Values within the text

Modified from Edmund Leach’s “Levi-Strauss in the Garden of Eden,” Discovery May 1962

1. Heaven (1:1, 1:2)
   Man (1:6)
   Mist/Waters (1:2) → Vegetation (1:12)
   Creatures (1:20)

   Earth (formless void)
   Vegetation (1:12)
   “be fruitful, . . .take dominion . .”

2. Man in Garden alone (2:7)
   Till the soil/care for garden (2:15)
   (to be acted upon)

3. Real World divided – many (2:10-14)
   Life – Death and Bisexual Real World

   Rivers (one river out of Eden divides and returns to fertilize Eden)

4. Animals birds, cattle and beasts – many (2:19-20)

5. Man (3:6)
   (husband)

   Woman suitable helpmate (2:21-23)
   (fertility drawn from infertile man – Adam’s rib while in deep sleep)

   Serpent
   (derives from Eve’s action of eating from Tree of Knowledge)
   →
   – expulsion from Eden into real world of bisexual life/death (3:24)

   Woman (3:2)
   (wife)

   Man alone (2:18)
6. Eve (4:1)
(mother of all those who live 3:20)

\[
\updownarrow \rightarrow \text{copulation} \rightarrow \text{incest} \rightarrow \text{Cain (4:1)} \quad \text{– reproduction is now possible}
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\text{– as is death now inevitable}
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Adam (4:1)

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**An Eye Juggling Interpretation of the Garden of Eden text**

1. While not the only mechanism, *key symbols* are often reflected/identified in binary and dialectical structures embedded within a text, i.e., meaningful symbols are often derived in the juxtaposition of opposites and/or the results of a mediated conflict. In the Garden of Eden text, there are examples of at least 5 sets of binary and/or dialectical structures.

2. In turn, key symbols often reveal the primary *messages* of a text to an intended audience. In the Garden of Eden text, there are two primary message sets.

   a. A “Theme of Reproduction” is expressed in all mediational transformations, e.g., mist, water, creatures, seeds, vegetation, man, women, serpent (carnal knowledge), and intercourse – all to help order and given meaning to the world

   b. As expressed in chapters/verses 2:21, 3:1, 4, there is an attempt to mediate and lessen the psychological conflict of “Original Sin” (given a Christian worldview context, not applicable for a Judaic or Islamic context given lack of “original sin”)

   Given the incest rule, i.e., one is not to marry women/men of one’s own group Eve is from Adam = own group

   Alternatives: 1. confirm incest rule don’t populate the world

   2. break the incest rule populate world

But given theme of reproduction and need to explain a populated world, only the second alternative works

   Thus in the telling the story of Genesis the trauma/conflict of original incest rendered less traumatic