

Cratos as Cognition: Gans and Dumézil in Dialogue on Language and Violence

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This paper will consider two complementary visions of culture and language: those of Georges Dumézil and Eric Gans. The mythographer Dumézil's ideas mediated between ancient Indo-European writings and their linguistic and mythological universe, while Gans's Generative Anthropology (GA) sees the deferral of violence through the exchange of signs as the essence of the human. Dumézil operated in the trans-disciplinary space between Indo-European comparative linguistics, comparative religion, a "new comparative mythology"⁽¹⁾ and half-a-dozen specialized philological disciplines. But it can be argued that in spirit his work is also close to anthropology. In turn, Gans's anthropological understanding of the fundamentals of human culture helps deepen Dumézil's vision. Indeed, I will argue that Gans's scene of origin and the concept of the deferral of violence at the beginnings of culture and language, find their reflection in the textual forms collected, interpreted, and analysed by Dumézil.

The central place in Dumézil's discourse is held by his famous theory of the three social functions, a tripartite structural formula present already in his earliest articles⁽²⁾, and later⁽³⁾ developed into a fuller religious and social system that served as the primary instrument of his analysis of the Indo-European cultural tradition. Dumézil argued that throughout the Eurasian linguistic community, religion and society manifested a tendency to organize themselves into three functional categories: 1) sovereignty, subdivided into legal and magical types; 2) violence, force and military power, especially that of warriors; and 3) a more diffuse category, concerned with material well-being, the production of resources (to sustain life and abundance), sensual pleasure, wealth, food, and the flourishing of life. One may also define this system using notions from medieval *tripartitio*,⁽⁴⁾ where the first function is that of the social group identified as *oratores* (that is: rulers, priests, kings and aristocracy in general). The second function would then refer to so called *bellatores* (that is knights and "military men"), while the third

would be that of *laboratores* (meaning the servants and craftsmen; the lowest social groups related to the productive and economic sphere).

Dumézil pioneered the insight that these priestly, warrior, and producing classes in ancient Indo-European societies saw themselves as ordained to fulfil particular tasks by virtue of their mythological origins. As in every other cultural tradition, that is, there was a mythological foundation, a set of narratives that announced and justified the presence of violence. These were to be found in the various generic spaces listed by one of Dumézil's most important commentators, Jöel H. Grisward: "Myth and *roman* ! Myth and epepee! Myth and history!" [\(5\)](#)

This paper will connect and compare the visions of Dumézil and Gans by reference to the concept of *Cratos*. We will associate *Cratos* first of all with the generative human cognition related to violence, and with violent actions themselves. Cognition, we will remind ourselves, is something deeper than knowledge, something hidden in human thoughts and minds, but at least partly discoverable (according, for example, to cognitive anthropology) through analyses of language and texts. *Cratos*, of course, is present as a myth in such texts as those of Hesiod and Aeschylus, and must also be thought of as a metaphor, a symbol or manifestation of cognition. But it is specifically a metaphor for violence and power, and for the knowledge of violence in the world.

We will attempt to further unfold and define this broad, powerful but admittedly multidimensional concept in its various aspects as we proceed. Certainly, *Cratos* is everywhere, omnipresent in human actions, in all kinds of knowledge of the world (and thus in many texts). But its deepest layer is that of generative cognition, the starting point of all human cognition. *Cratos*, even as defined in ancient myths, generates all human activities, including the creation of language and culture.

Generative cognition represents the primary human mind, and its existence *in statu nascendi* makes it reproducible, allowing for the production of particular knowledge about the causal structure of the world. It is the initial state of the mind and is programmed for the protection of human existence through representation, in the perennial situation which Gans describes as the "disparity between totality of culture, religion and representation on the one side and violence on the other." [\(6\)](#) In response to the threat of mimetically generated violence, in the GA vision, humans protect themselves by deferring violence through a sequence of signs, a process prolonged indefinitely by imitation. To put this another way, reciprocal relations of the generative function of cognition built on violence and responding to its existence create cultural representations. These representations can then be sequenced according to Dumézil's interpretation of the Indo-European mythical tradition. We shall therefore look for *Cratos* and its deep function of generative

cognition in both Gans's ordinary scene and in Dumézil's trifunctional hypothesis. We will aim to show the basic arguments in Dumézil's narratives in the context of Gans's ideas, remembering that through the latter's work and previously that of René Girard, violence became a scientific issue with regard to language and religion, even if it had already been an object of sustained inquiry in neighboring areas of the humanities and also distinctly in the works of Dumézil.

Cratos in Human Culture

Cratos, as we noted above, may be understood as a metaphor, specifically as a metaphoric figure of human violence and power, including military power. Indeed, we may term it a Conceptual Metaphor,[\(7\)](#) which shapes not just human communication, but also the way we think and act.[\(8\)](#)

According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, metaphors may be easily transferred from the physical world to the realm of abstract reasoning and argumentation[\(9\)](#). In this context *Cratos* as a metaphor has a central position in human life. Indeed, *Cratos* as a metaphor directs and governs the content of the myths presented by Dumézil. Moreover, the myth of *Cratos* may be understood as a myth of experience, a result of the interactions of humans with their physical environment and other people. For Lakoff and Johnson, such myths imply comprehension and understanding—in fact 'myth' explicitly means self-comprehension and social understanding. It is worth noting that these ideas unite in Ward Goodenough's approach, known as cognitive anthropology, where culture is understood as a conceptual system "one has to know or believe" and indeed to "learn." Such a system is the end product of learning: "knowledge, in a most general, if relative, sense of the term." Goodenough, a major player in the development of anthropological theory explains that "it is rather an organisation ... of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating and otherwise interpreting them."[\(10\)](#) In other words, myth as one of the oldest forms of culture is the representation of human knowledge and at the same time a form of human cognition.

Lakoff and Johnson also assert that human nature forces human experience (which is repeatable) into the creation of such categories as human communication, mutual understanding, ritual, esthetic experience, and politics.[\(11\)](#) Such a causal sequence is comparable to Gans's theory of myth in the origin of cultural representation[\(12\)](#) and in his scene of origin.[\(13\)](#) However, myths are understood by Gans as "narrative explanations" and elements "whose plausibility is derived from real experience."[\(14\)](#) The word *myth* derives from the Greek *mythos*, which has a range of meanings from "word," through "saying" and "story," to "fiction." We may note that the first two of these definitions work well with Gans's theory that the origins of

culture are coeval with the advent of speech and language, which indeed can be seen in many mythical scenarios, and notably in those cited by Dumézil. Dumézil creates his own narrative space by combining various analyses of Indo-European myths, but this does not interfere with the view that mythical narrations are provided with their own dramatic structure and are passed on for ages from one generation to another, through what we usually know as popular knowledge. Myth is thus fundamentally important for the transfer of the long-term structures and resultant social organization distinguished by Dumézil. It is perhaps worth recalling here Paul Ricoeur's observation that the mythical consciousness in primary civilizations is almost the same everywhere.(15) It expresses an "active memory," that uses knowledge of the past to give significance to the present.(16) Ricoeur also argues that a myth is not a false explanation by means of images and fables, but a "traditional narration which relates to events that happened at the beginning of time and which has the purpose of providing grounds for the ritual actions of men of today and, in a general manner, establishing all the forms of action and thought by which man understands himself in his world."(17) This sense of myth as a traditional narration is also present in Dumézil's works and could actually be understood, in Ricoeur's terms, as reflecting a universal mental state and as a cultural code defining the most basic actions of human beings.(18) We may add that myth hides something related to Heidegger's concept of truth, which helps "the essence of the truth (*aletheia*) to be preserved and unforgotten,"(19) something deeply present, that is, in human cognition.

Cratos, then, is a multivalent figure of myth occupying a realm intermediary between ordinary life and the ideal world, a dimension of particular significance to anthropology. In classical Greece, the myth of *Cratos* is quoted most frequently in the narratives of Hesiod(20) and Aeschylus(21) and can be related to the core idea of Gans's theory and his analysis of the basic behaviors in which violent appetites, rivalries and conflicts are constantly present—latent, but potentially operative—but contingently capable of deferral by language and other cultural forms. Hesiod's *Theogony* tells the origin of *Cratos* this way: "Styx, Ocean's daughter, mingling with *Pallas*, bore *Zelus* (Rivalry) and beautiful-ankled *Nike* (Victory) in her house, and she gave birth to *Cratos* (Supremacy) and *Bia* (Force), eminent children [who are all] seated next to deep-thundering Zeus." (22) Hesiod writes that "eternal Styx came first of all to Olympus with her own children . . . and Zeus honored her and gave her exceptional gifts. For he set her to be the great oath of the gods, and her sons to dwell with him for all their days."(23) The siblings of *Cratos*, children of *Pallas* and *Styx* have significant features. *Zelus* is zeal but personifies emulation, eager rivalry, envy, and jealousy. *Bia* directly expresses force. All of them are wrestling with evil forces and all of them accompany Zeus to the end of their days. So I presume that *Cratos* among them is symbolically involved in the struggle to master the forces of evil—violence and hatred in different variants. In the *Prometheus Bound* of

Aeschylus *Cratos* appears, indeed in the first line of the play, in a double structure, the pair Power and Violence (*Bia* and *Cratos*). (24) As Hesiod indicates in the *Theogony*, *Cratos* and his siblings live permanently with Zeus, (25) whom they follow wherever he leads them, (26) embodying his absolute power over the universe. In the version of Aeschylus, *Bia* and *Cratos* are even understood as fulfillments of the commands of Zeus. (27) The status of *Cratos* with regard to the enslavement of Prometheus, according to the will of Zeus and the other gods, is special. He mediates between the divine and humanity as the mastermind of the enslavement of Prometheus, in what became an allegory of violence itself, equated paradigmatically with human nature and active in social interactions since the beginning. One might well recall here the biblical phrase adopted by René Girard, in just this context: *Cratos* too represents something “hidden since the foundation of the world.” (28)

Cratos had a much wider role in ancient Greece than that played by the deity *Kratos*. The Indo-European roots of *Kratos* (*craft*, *crafty*, *Kraft*, etc.) are well established, the word dealing always with the control of forces or power or violence. *Kratos* as *kratu* and *kratia* represent a semantic core of *Cratos*. The Greek (but also Germanic, and Slavonic) mythology speaks of the problem of controlling violence, deceit, and related forces. In Hellenistic Greek the verb *krateô* meant “getting a grip” and already was used by Homer in the sense of “control” (control of one’s emotions, eyes, and so forth). Still in Greek as *kratu*, it is the “power,” “authority,” even “the state” or what could be understood as the control of society by institutional violence. However, the main meaning was “getting power” (mainly in political sense). There is also another dimension of *Cratos*, where its lexeme appears in the notion of democracy (from *demo-cratos*), being connected to “order” and “rule” but with the sense of powerful authority rather than explicit violence. The word *kratos* (usually translated as “power” or “force”) is present in Vernant’s and Naquet’s *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, (29) where we find a passage from Aeschylus’ *Suppliant Women* : “ the idea of *kratos* can be seen to oscillate between two contrary accepted meanings, unable to settle for the one rather than the other. On the lips of King Pelasgus *kratos*, associated with *kurios* [‘figure of authority’], refers to a legitimate authority, the control rightfully exercised by the guardian over whoever is legally dependent upon his power. On the lips of the Danaids [the Suppliant Maidens of the title], the same word, drawn into the semantic field of *bia* [‘violence’], refers to ‘brute force,’ constraint imposed by violence, in its aspect that is most opposed to justice and right.” (30) So we may suppose the main idea of *Cratos* to be involved with the struggle between brute force itself, and the control of it through legal authority, which is, however, also a form of suppressed violence.

Even if Dumézil does not treat *Cratos* openly, he does deal with the issues we have been developing. First of all, his trifunctional system is “violent in its nature,” as a

system of hierarchical order, a system of subordination of the second and the third function to the first. In fact, *Cratos* becomes a semantic link between the first and the second function, in other words it is power that is structured into authority in the process of social stratification. This means that Dumézil's three-functional order is an expression of violence, controlled by the power of the first function and the power of all three functions in their unity. Dumézil speaks about trifunctional structure as an abstract prototype, a pattern for social relationships. He notes, for example, in the context of the development of Iran, that in order to rule royal power needs to control and arrange the three functions in harmony to produce a final syntheses,⁽³¹⁾ "an ideal model [or] an easy and typical résumé of social relations."⁽³²⁾ Here we may recognise the controlling function of power which builds the metaphoric image of *Cratos*. Dumézil's theory stresses a rule of gradual transition from myth to the three functions, then finally to the establishment of the system of law. This is ultimately an explication of the process of creating a culture, and as such it shares much with the narrative of human social development suggested in Generative Anthropology.

Dumézil in Gans's World

What we may call a search for "cognition from *Cratos*" as part of a "generative constitution" is implicit in both Gans's and Dumézil's discourses on language and culture. *Cratos* we may indeed see as the most general category in Dumézil's study of Indo-European narratives, encompassing and cumulating most of his examples. And while cultural attempts to liberate humans from the powers of *Cratos* may be said to be the focus of Gans's theory of the deferral of violence, they are also present, as I shall try prove, in Dumézil's analysis of Indo-European civilizations. Noting how both of them thus open up lines of mutual reference, I will consider the *deferral of violence* as the human ontology that encompasses language and culture, understood from an anthropological perspective, and which replaces abstract philosophical analyses and comes closer to the foundations of the human. Actually, what Gans has elaborated as a Generative Anthropology affords new perspectives in a variety of fields in the humanities. His "originary thinking" and scenic logic can be applied to a great number of Dumézil's analyses of Indo-European "textual survivals," for example, notably at the beginning of his career, where he discussed many legends with constitutive elements of violence, analyses in which we may see strong commonalities with the approach charted by Gans.⁽³³⁾

Violence as a mythical construct, adopting various forms of expression, is present in many of Dumézil's analyses of Indo-European texts. These cover distant languages and civilizations⁽³⁴⁾ dating back as far as Vedic, Zoroastrian, Greek, Roman and Old-Nordic times. Udo Strutyński argues that Dumézil thus "tries to resuscitate the consciousness of dead civilizations, to regain the truth in the old sense."⁽³⁵⁾ This

“great system-builder of past centuries,” (36) turning back to the most ancient preserved texts of human culture, becomes a “universalist of a sort” (37) who refers many times to the origins of Indo-European languages and civilizations. (38) Indeed he is, Strutyński notes, an “explorer of our origins.” (39) Gans for his own part writes about man’s “mysterious desire to know his own beginnings,” as a desire that “motivates [man’s] worldly interests.” (40) A return to our origins, furthermore, establishes conditions for a dialogue about the human itself. (41) However, for Gans these origins are in the *statu nascendi* of human language and culture and start with the emission of first human sign and the aborted gesture of appropriation. Dumézil is concerned rather with the earliest texts of the Proto-Indo-Europeans and with further ancient texts of their descendants, masterpieces of sacred and mythological narration. These texts already form an advanced narrative system and thus contain considerable potential for linguistic communication, corresponding to what Gans calls “Higher Linguistic Forms.” (42) Gans describes discourse as “the chief vehicle of culture and the most reliable witness of its historical achievements.” (43) All the texts analyzed by Dumézil—sacred lore, epic mythologies or legends—are examples of what Gans calls “discourse *proprement dit* [which] draws us into the domain of cultural-historical opacity in which the temporal nature of social experience must be lived out, albeit in reduced form, in the discursive-literary or philosophical-model.” (44) Dumézil’s analyses express the presence of social experience in a discursive-literary model, which Gans distinguishes as a cultural discourse from his minimal anthropological theory by affirming, for the purposes of his exposition, a choice of theory over discourse “or more precisely of human science over cultural hermeneutics.” (45)

The foundation of Dumézil’s works is provided by a linguistic model, (46) constructed on the base of *verba exponentia*, and their social meanings. *Verba exponentia* are chosen by Dumézil to represent the Indo-European textual tradition and may constitute names of personal gods (e.g. *Mithra, Varuṇa, Indra, Hera, Athena, Aphrodite*), names of heroes (e.g. brothers *Pandava, Camillus, Cuchulain*), terms describing positions in society (e.g. *raǰ, rex, brahman, flamen Dialis, flamen Martialis, flamen Quirinalis*, in the case of *ordo sacerdotum*), or all those, in short, who “had some importance for the [particular] community” (47) and for the whole Indo-European cultural matrix. Dumézil presents different lexemes involved in the process of ongoing, constantly performed comparisons of Indo-European categories from socio-religious-mythical spaces which are, according to their meaning, juxtaposed and structured in his trifunctional order, a conceptual structure often manifested in hierarchized terms (as we noted above). This results in a huge narrative edifice, explaining and commenting upon—that is to say analyzing—a great collection of Indo-European textual output, interpreted and schematized in a cultural discourse, which for Gans is “central, not marginal to human society.” (48) Moreover, Dumézil’s holistic comprehension of Indo-European culture involves a

new, mediated discourse, modified however into an entelechy, an entirety of great complexity,(49) a constant, never-ending comment upon comments. Dumézil's Indo-European *Summa* thus comprises an enormous discursive space united by the theory of trifunctional order and related to both social and divine worlds. These worlds define social strata, composed by three social functions, and according to their architect, form a great linguistic family. Dumézil's research output starts with language, operates in language and composes a symbolic space of *logos*, specific to the humanities of his time. In Dumézil's introduction to Mircea Eliade's treatise on the history of religions, *logos* becomes a key notion of research where he declares that "it is under the sign of *logos* that research stands today." (50) This symbolic confirmation of the central place of language in his discourse on culture corresponds to the key role of linguistic consciousness in Gans's originary scene.

Dumézil's collection of old texts from the "Great Tradition" (51) equates to "high culture" as defined by Wilhelm Halbfass: (52) first of all *Vedic*, than *Avestien*, Roman, Greek, German (Celtic, Scandinavian, and Old-Nordic). These constitute Dumézil's *logos*, beginning in the Sanskrit and Hurrian language, extending to the Greek myths of the Aegean Sea and other legends collected in his field studies. Dumézil created two worlds: one which classified the oldest mythological systems of the Indo-European area based on religious and epic literature, and another elaborated by Quechua linguistic data he collected himself in the Peruvian region of Cusco or Caucasia (Nartes). He based his analysis mainly on ancient sources as well as, more rarely, on his own personal fieldwork. This resulted in interpretations mostly of sacred and normative texts, which represent "high cultures" and constitute a transformed version of previous oral tradition. (53)

Strutynsky has claimed that Dumézil, being an analyst and master of synthesis, recognizes "inherently manifesting characteristic of Indo-European traits, traits that are structurally complex and display a conscious socio-religious ideology" (54) I want to deepen this perspective and add that Dumézil's Indo-European narrative system, while containing the Indo-European ideological traits mentioned by Strutynsky, also presents mythology and theology (55) as basic components of Indo-European civilizations. His theory of three social functions, distilled from them, exposes the fact that social violence is deeply rooted in Indo-European societies. First of all we find these three functions clearly overlapping with the historically established social hierarchy, which also exists in divine societies, stratified in classes like a human society, where one group dominates the other groups, yet where a coherent entirety is formed. Such societies secure their existence through the hierarchical subordination of one class to the others. (56) The concept of social stratification and division into social classes is the epitome of violence itself. Upper classes rule, which always and everywhere means that mechanisms of control (understood in the widest sense) are used, while rivalry (inside each class and with

the other classes) is constantly present. The very idea of dividing society into groups, fractions or classes involves violence in various more or less refined aspects and forms. But although subordination itself is violent by definition, at the same time it prevents total violence, Hobbes's war of all against all.[\(57\)](#) To call a social position by a name is to give an original sign of its designation to the society.[\(58\)](#) It is to indicate a function for the members of the society and to give a sign to the society that stratification is already established. One may say that this "minimal violence" of giving a name assigns a meaning to particular social classes, protecting society from general, even total violence. In this sense, the theory of three social functions is the core and essence of the Indo-European cognition, of social-self-consciousness. For Dumézil, this "trifunctional" cognition applies in all Indo-European societies, which all imitate and repeat the same pattern. And the tripartite division has been inherited by contemporary societies, making Dumézil's work a universal and a living theory. In the contemporary world, that is, we see the mimetic repetition of the three social functions—a legacy of its primary model—along with their inherent control of violence through violence. The best example of its relation to Gans's (as well as Girard's) concepts is the embodiment of violence itself in the nature and prominent role of the second function. I want to underline how deeply the violence is imbedded there and indeed to argue that the second function is violence itself.

In Dumézil's work we find numerous examples to help us understand the concept of *Cratos* in association with the second function, representing all kinds of violence and power but especially its military form. Dumézil found the second function of such a great importance that he devoted a considerable portion of his output to it. The function is a prevailing theme in, for example, *Les mythes et dieux des Germains : Essai d'interprétation comparative* (1938), *Aspects de la fonction guerrière chez les Indo-Européens* (1956), *Les Dieux des Germains. Essai sur la formation de la religion scandinave* (1959), *Heur et malheur du guerrier: Aspects mythiques de la fonction guerrière chez les Indo-Européens* (1969), and *Archaic Roman Religion* (1970). Nor may we forget the synthesis in *Mythe et Épopée I.II.III* (1995).

Gans writes of the birth of literature as coinciding with regression in ancient social organization or economic decline.[\(59\)](#) Perhaps all epics in the Indo-European tradition, including those considered by Dumézil, are coincident upon such decline or disruptive change. In *Mythe et Épopée I.II.III*[\(60\)](#) Dumézil, as he surveys the Indo-European universe, spends considerable space on the "ideology of three social functions" with a particular emphasis on the median and central position of the second one. This is evident especially in his analyses of such epics as the Hindu *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, the Scandinavian *Heimskringla*, *Poetic Edda* and *Prose Edda* (by Snorri Sturlusson) and

Gesta Danorum (by Saxo Grammaticus), but also in Cicero's *Republic*, the Scythian legends, the Nart sagas and many others.

In Dumézil's analyses, the second function prevails in such texts and, in its metaphoric layer *Cratos* is central. I propose to find in Dumézil's narrative collections two main categories representing the *Cratos*: 1) specific figures and 2) specific events. Perhaps Dumézil, as he concentrates on facts(61) in Durkheimian style, may be called, to use Bruno Latour's words, one of the "Factish Gods."(62) In any case, whatever the origin of these facts—and despite Latour's notion of "factishes" which explores a way of respecting the objectivity of facts by reference to fetishes—Dumézil is convinced of their existence, and we want to show the power of these facts/fetishes as they manifest as figures and events.

1) Figures. The most representative figures, as regards *Cratos*, are heroes and divinities. They include Mars (in Rome, the most prominent of the military gods in Roman religion; he is the power that drives wars—but ideally, wars that result in secure peace);(63) Thor (in Scandinavia, the god who wields the hammer, the bane of giants: he starts off as the "thunder-master");(64) Indra (in India as a personification of a king of gods, but also of the warrior class);(65) Varuna (the sovereign as attacker, solemn, inspired, violent, awe-inspiring and military);(66) and Vayu ("brutal boxer", representing the warriors-*kṣatriya* in India and Iran).(67) There are also a number of early Roman military leaders like Horatius (participant in the "superfluous violence of war"(68)); Tullus Hostilius, third king of Rome and a first conqueror, thus *militaris rei institutor*;(69) as well Marcus Furius Camillus, a wartime leader who held several military triumphs, was victorious against enemies whenever "the battles occur at daybreak," and who was a dictator five times, granted the title of "second founder" (70) of Rome and, according to Tacitus, was "a member of the Furius family [who] had achieved military fame."(71)

2) Events. The second category representing *Cratos* are events connected with war and its violence. Many examples are to be found in the whole domain of the Indo-European linguistic and cultural area, beginning with *Mahabharata*, an epic modeled on Vedic patterns. Dumézil finds in this work "a mythical transposition of broad system of representation into the human world."(72) Specifically, it features a transposition of myth into the narration of a great, almost mortal world crisis,(73) where we find a confrontation of "forces of Good and Evil up to destructive paroxysm"(74) and countless military conflicts.

Other examples are related to some of the "principal events of Roman history."(75) These include Rome's first war, involving Romulus (a warrior king) and Remus, the twin sons of Mars and their fraternal rivalry over the establishment of the future town (The familiar narrative of this conflict involves the naming of the new town,

the number of auspicious vultures seen, the murder of Remus by Romulus, the rape of the Sabines and a war with neighbours, when Titus attacks Rome,(76) with its final reconciliation when life regains harmony and a new, united society is created.)

Parallel to these rich Hindu and Roman scenarios is the Scandinavian mythical tradition. Here too one may find a fully elaborated presentation of the three social functions, with the second function prevailing. This tradition brings us to the subject where I especially seek union of the concepts of Dumézil and Gans, and therefore warrants a fuller examination.

The Scandinavian Example

In Dumézil's Indo-European mythical narratives we find also another sort of event: the "war of foundations." (77) Such events exemplify a concentration of violence *in tempore illo* with the purpose of justifying human conflicts. These wars provide the "grounding" for new societies and make clear that there are no foundations without war. This kind of war shows up as a repetitive "formula" found in many different cultural areas(78) and expresses a cumulative explosion of acts of violence, usually as a longer process. The violence of such war is noted already in the first of Dumézil's books to detail the three social functions : *Mythes et dieux des Germains* (1939),(79) and in its more elaborated version published in 1959, *Les dieux des Germains*.(80) It may be also indicated in some other books, including a collected version of differentiated, selected, mythical stories, published after Dumézil's death. It is in *Esquisses de mythologie*.(81) however, that we find Dumézil's fullest analyses of Scandinavian mythology, on the basis of *The Poetic Edda* and *The Prose Edda* . The second, military function, with a military code of violence, is present everywhere there, even in a description and remarks on the Scandinavian *thing* or governing assembly, the center of their cultural space. It is important to note that Dumézil shows us a picture which transmits the *Edda's* logic: that war is a kind of "bloody *thing*" and the "*thing* in the period of peace also resembles war," that indeed the "debating population [in the *thing*] looks like and behaves as a fighting army." (82) This clearly indicates that conflicts and fights as violent actions are always present in the social assembly, an insight that we can directly relate to Gans's scene of origin. Violence, in short, defines social behavior—even a debate remains a fight. Discussing this issue, Dumézil refers to the findings of Jan de Vries, who shows the identity of the "god of battles" and "the god of law" (83) and strengthens the position of the second function, where battles and war become a law and constitute the social rule, on the pattern of rights prevailing among the society of Germanic gods.(84)

Gans claims that the "literary texts of a society are very nearly the only effective source of our intuitive grasp of what life in such a society might have been like" and

that “this intuition is a privileged path to anthropological truth.”(85) According to Dumézil, myth turns into epic and history, performing not a simple registration of facts, but a fixation into narrative form of the key values of the group.(86) So for Dumézil, as for Gans, it is texts, stories, extracts from great, mythical narratives telling us about epochal events—all kinds of wars, but especially foundational and eschatological wars—which reveal anthropological truth. Narratives of warfare establish what Gans describes as “the most primitive condition of value, [creating] a competitive arena in which individuals are measured against each other and where their usefulness to their social group knows no other ethical limitations.”(87) Likewise, in the mythical Indo-European literature assembled in Dumézil’s interpretative schemata (grouped into his second category), we find a sequence of military heroes who accumulated such value, creating, in Gans’s terms, a “market” for individual talent.(88) I would call it a “market” for signs of *Cratos*, in the sense that these extraordinary individuals are in many different ways correlated with violence, and as practitioners of the second function they expect and are given privileged places in society. They use or prevail over violence in accordance with the limits established by their society, limits designed to protect that society from chaos and disorder and to preserve a state of equilibrium, something which is of the first importance in Dumézil’s model, and which he expresses as a “harmony of three social functions.”(89)

Dumézil analysed the *Prose Edda* (c. 1220 CE) of the Scandinavian patrician and erudite, Snorri Sturluson, who wanted to “rescue a store of images and periphrasis” of a “pagan mythology.”(90) Dumézil relates this text to Scandinavian eschatology, using a story which articulates the “god’s destiny,”(91) a global war of Ases and Vanes,(92) an example of violence in its extreme form. Snorri’s text speaks of constant wars intertwined with times of peace, during which preparations for the ultimate conflict are continuously made. This final war is called, *Ragnarök* (“the twilight of gods”), an event without winners and losers, but rather a time of cosmic destruction.(93) After *Ragnarök* “the world will be born again, full of brightness and greenery.”(94) This “first war of two armies in the world,”(95) was to be a war involving gods of magic and warriors (Ases), and gods of fecundity and peace (Vanes),(96) where (as usual) the first two functions fight with the third one.

Dumézil was persuaded of the reference of myths to actual geographic space, so he played the consonance of “Ases” in the mythical tale into the continent “Asia,” believing that the origins of Ases and Vanes were connected to the shores of the Black Sea and the Don River. He assumed that an actual war was fought there, where the migration began which eventually led to Scandinavia.(97) In his three functional optics, Dumézil attempts to explain mythical episodes, in their close conjunction. For him, the conflict between the Ases and Vanes is not a war in the “human sense,” but most of all a conflict between peoples of the same size,

between two divine groups with different but complementary functions. He sees here the quest for reconciliation between representatives of different functions as a result of their previous separation. Reconciliation, indeed, is a powerful force in Dumézil's interpretation of Scandinavian mythology.⁽⁹⁸⁾ In Gans's terms, this force can be seen in the passage from the extreme of violence to the extreme of peace, an abrupt cessation of violence so memorable that it takes on the character of an *event* of special creative power.⁽⁹⁹⁾ "Generalized violence," for Gans, "can only be experienced as crisis—a crisis practically unknown to the animal world—and the sudden end of this crisis, as an event, the reproduction of which in ensuing crises could not be other than a sedimentary form of representation because this reproduction involves at the very least the renewal of the presence of the community to itself."⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

Looking at the text of the *Prose Edda* more specifically, we may note the passage quoted by Dumézil, from Snorri's *Ynglingasaga*, "history of Ynglingar dynasty" (Chapter IV) about "Odin's war with the people of Vanaland [on the each side of Don],"⁽¹⁰¹⁾ which Dumézil names in his analysis as a "Decapitation and cutting up [of] Scandinavia." The passage focuses on the violent war, the appearance of a victim and at the same time, the presence of sparagmos—an indispensable element of Gans's anthropology:

Odin went out with a great army against the Vanaland people; but they were well prepared, and defended their land; so that victory was changeable, and they ravaged the lands of each other, and did great damage. They tired of this at last, and on both sides appointed a meeting for establishing peace, made a truce, and exchanged hostages. The Vanaland people sent their best men, Njord the Rich, and his son Frey. The people of Asaland sent a man called Hone, whom they thought well suited to be a chief, as he was a stout and very handsome man; and with him they sent a man of great understanding called Mime. On the other side, the Vanaland people sent the wisest man in their community, who was called Kvase. Now, when Hone came to Vanaheim he was immediately made a chief, and Mime came to him with good counsel on all occasions. But when Hone stood in the Things or other meetings, if Mime was not near him, and any difficult matter was laid before him, he always answered in one way - "Now let others give their advice"; so that the Vanaland people got a suspicion that the Asaland people had deceived them in the exchange of men. They took Mime, therefore, and beheaded him, and sent his head to the Asaland people. Odin took the head, smeared it with herbs so that it should not rot, and sang incantations over it. Thereby he gave it the power that it spoke to him, and discovered to him many secrets. Odin placed Njord and Frey as priests of the sacrifices, and they became Diar of the Asaland people. Njord's daughter Freya was priestess of the sacrifices, and first taught the Asaland people the magic art, as it was in use and fashion among the Vanaland

people.⁽¹⁰²⁾ There are some points in this narrative to which I would call attention. In the first part of the above citation we find the classical motive of war between two groups of gods, which constitutes an example of the above-mentioned “war of foundations” in mythical, Scandinavian society. In reference to this motive, Dumézil assumes that we are not dealing with war in a human sense of the word but with a conflict between two groups with “different and complementary functions.”⁽¹⁰³⁾ This statement confirms his obvious conviction of the importance of social functions in Indo-European societies, but also reveals that conflict is itself inscribed in the nature of those functions, however “complementary” or even “harmonious” they may sometimes be. Following Gans, we might in fact recognize here a war in the “human sense,” with its displays of primarily military *valor*, reflecting “the first and most primitive criterion of *value* employed by the heroic society.”⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ As related to the world of the gods, however, the war described in the passage also contains elements of a kind of positional game, played out in the space of conflict and rivalry inherent to the hierarchical order of the three functions.

The story shows us two societies who fight with each other, do considerable damage to each other’s countries and then, when they have had enough of destruction, exchange hostages. The exchange of hostages between two groups of gods remains the mechanism of uniting two communities, a principle described in theories of the gift articulated by Marcel Mauss and Bronisław Malinowski.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ In this context Dumézil himself speaks about a “fusion” which generates a “complete community,”⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ and can be seen in operation throughout Scandinavian mythology. The next important narrative element involves the Vanaland ambassador Hone, and his helplessness in the management of the Ases: he is able to solve difficult matters only with help of his companion Mime. Hone’s noticeable and unacceptable behavior shows a disorder in the structure of governance in his society. First of all, a hostage (Hone) becomes a commander, which reverses the normal hierarchy and then secondly, Hone doesn’t perform his duties correctly. Both of these anomalies demand sanction, and the Vanes react by decapitating Mime. It seems that all the participants in this mythical scenario didn’t respect the superior rules that might have been available to them in a market-based system of ethical values.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ The Vanes claimed that they sent to the Ases their most distinguished people for the exchange, while the Ases maintained that they also sent somebody who had everything needed—except this clearly wasn’t true. Gans argues that in ancient societies the modelled exchange occurs according to an “ethical structure” which precedes the exchange of goods, and encourages “the indefinite accumulation of values.”⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ But here such values—embodied in the choice of hostages—have been flouted. The choice of Hone suggests indeed a veritable abandonment of ethical values, undermining social order and finally demanding a sanction from society in the form of an act of extreme violence, a decapitation. In Dumézil’s terms this choice (and Hone’s subsequent abdication of

the task of taking decisions) also means a violation of the ethical values of the first function, whose duty is to govern, as well as to control and observe the rules. Consequently, the improper behavior of a leader who could not fulfill the obligations of his adopted function has generated resentment, a source of violent action, and a prominent feature of Gans's depiction of the human scene.(109) Resentment is visible in the behaviour of the Vanes in the irritation caused by the supposed deception of the Ases and explains the violence committed against Mime. Moreover, a victim, in this case Mime, becomes, as Gans notes, "a suitable outlet for purely destructive mimetic aggression,"(110) because of some visible sign of vulnerability.

The next episode important for us involves an effect of the use of violence by the Vanes, a group defined by Dumézil as "gods of fecundity and peace". After the decapitation, the detached head of Mime is given to the Ases, the "gods of magic and warriors." In René Girard's terms, we may understand Mime as being "selected as a single victim, on whom the violence of the entire group would be concentrated,"(111) a victim, or "scapegoat," thus of mimetic rivalry and of the unanimity of murder/sacrifice, even if it is actually, in Gans's modification of Girard's scenario, the "pure form" of the language or sign that designates him that is "the only *necessary* element of the origin."(112) In mythical narratives this unanimity constitutes a condition of the social order which emerges after an act of violence and may be restored again. In mythical terms, the death of this victim is thus a "founding murder." The Vanes as a collective murdered the victim, initiating a passage from violence (also previously a "general" condition during the time of war) to a state of peace.(113) The reconciliation of the collective could have appeared, finally, as a grace bestowed by the victim.(114) Moreover we may call this murder an "original murder" related to—as Gans says—the "original event of culture" and at the same time the "origin of *representation*," that which "gives a cognitive [...] significance to [...] the original victim. [It] is the origin of [...] the linguistic sign, the first instance of which occurs precisely in the representation of the victim within the original communal presence."(115)

Our story says that Odin took the decapitated head before the reconciliation of divine societies has started, rubbed it to protect it, uttered magic words over it, and gave it power to speak many secret words to him. We may suppose that this action establishes the collectivity of Vanes "as a community by giving it a language."(116) Here, the decapitated head of Mime performs the function of the body of a victim who represents, as Gans says, a "sign" "created by the collectivity . . . at the same time creates it as a community."(117) Furthermore, the veneration of victim's head is a ritual behavior present already in the first moment after an act of violence immediately accompanied by another act, an act of speech. Odin's speaking of magic words to the decapitated head, shows the primary position of speech as an "ostensive act" (as in Gans's hypothesis of the ordinary scene) but also as a

primary moment of return to life, a demonstration indeed of vital energy, and at the same time an manifestation of representation. Gans notes that “the scene of representation itself founds only one institution, that of language,”(118) but we may also characterize the emission of speech here as an affirmation of existence, and a ritual uttering of magic formulae. The episode illustrates Gans’s point that for primal societies (in anthropological sense) “all social interactions are mediated by cultural (that is ritual forms).”(119) But all such interactions, Gans argues, also recapitulate the original event. In this case, we can see how the ordinary scene is enhanced by ritual veneration, where Odin appoints Njǫrðr and Freyr as sacrificial functionaries, together with Freya, Njǫrðr’s daughter. Violence and ritual integrate the community and allow the whole system to be reborn. Dumézil calls this story a “myth of foundation,”(120) and calls Mime’s decapitated head the “head of the most wise man,” which was revived miraculously and kept its linguistic function.(121) Dumézil’s remark about the head coming back to life confirms Gans’s concept of scenic logic. The text narrates a repetition of a primary human function: what was first human—ritual sacrifice—is then displaced into, or figured as, a narrative of divine activity. If we call this verbal communication a discourse, we find a confirmation here too of the relationship between ritual and discourse, as described by Gans: “Discourse in its origin is not a rival, but a supplement to ritual.”(122) This relationship will also develop, however. Discourse will slowly replace ritual, and begins by providing a more satisfactory catharsis for its consumers by means of its representations and the explanations they can offer.(123)

From the point of view of Girardian anthropology, the Scandinavian mythical tradition, discussed above, presents the victim, as “the first object of the attention of the community, [...] the signifier of the entire process of crisis and resolution.”(124) At the start of his earliest monograph on Generative Anthropology, Gans summarizes Girard’s transcendental hypothesis as including: 3) “*The event. Choice of an “emissary victim”*”; 4) “*The victim’s body as the first signifier of the sacred*” and 5) “*The reproduction of the sign.*”(125) While Dumézil theorizes his three social functions as embodied in Indo-European myths, Gans at this stage eschews such an approach, declaring that he “can make no attempt to deal with mythographical and ethnological evidence.”(126) But in his next book he is already elaborating his hypothesis through an analysis of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.(127) These are of course points of reference for all literary epistemology (but presumably for mythography as well), and Gans uses them to isolate two opposing formulae for sublimating resentment,(128) features also present in many other mythological variants. The epics and all their components belong, Gans tells us, to the era of what he calls “high secular culture,”(129) which arises as soon as differentiated social structure begins to generate what he describes as resentment.(130) Epic episodes presented by Dumézil, however, also display an enormous number of actions generated by just such resentment. For Gans, “high culture becomes

possible, not to say necessary, as soon as resentment comes to be perceived as a necessary social phenomenon.” (131) Greek secular culture, for example, “accepts the necessity of resentment as definitive.” (132) This analysis, we may say, directly complements, or indeed may explain Dumézil’s concentration on his trifunctional system, which controls and limits resentment through its hierarchy and the specified range for each function, creating a set of strongly protected boundaries and differences. This inherently violent stratification is policed by the violence of the second function and to a lesser degree by that of the first as well—violence is ultimately controlled by violence. Dumézil, like Gans, is nonetheless describing the human pursuit of harmony and peace, the need for which generates social structure itself. (133)

All the events presented above show the inseparability and interrelation of many of the elements of Gans’s scenic model operating under the auspices of *Cratos*: the presence of total violence, the violence of the victim/sacrifice component, and the violence to be deferred by the appearance of speech acts and by the communal participation in ritual. As Gans concludes, commenting on Girard, “ritual sacrifice arises as a re-presentation of the original event.” (134) The original event includes the appearance of language, but by language Gans means all cultural forms of representation, basic and developed, elementary and matured. The term refers also to form embodied in a shape of poetry. That is why the last episode we will analyze, important from the point of view of Gans’s theory, is connected with an appearance of poetry as a developed form of language representation. Let us focus on another part of Dumézil’s analyses of the afore-mentioned *Prose Edda* of Sturlusson, entitled “Bragaræður” and often translated as “On Poetic Diction.” This part of the text relates to a sequence of events subsequent to the war between Ases and Vanes, where we find a significant conversation. An Aslander asks Bragi, “Where does the art of poetry come from?” and Bragi provides the following answer:

These were the beginnings thereof. The gods had a dispute with the folk which are called Vanir, and they appointed a peace-meeting between them and established peace in this way: they each went to a vat and spat their spittle therein. Then at parting the gods took that peace-token and would not let it perish, but shaped thereof a man. This man is called Kvasir, and he was so wise that none could question him concerning anything but that he knew the solution. He went up and down the earth to give instruction to men; and when he came upon invitation to the abode of certain dwarves, Fjalar and Galarr, they called him into privy converse with them, and killed him, letting his blood run into two vats and a kettle. The kettle is named Ódrerir, and the vats Són and Bodn; they blended honey with the blood, and the outcome was that mead by the virtue of which he who drinks becomes a skald or scholar. The dwarves reported to the Æsir that Kvasir had choked on his own shrewdness, since there was none so wise there as to be able to question his

wisdom.(135)

Æsir and Vanir have met to put an end to the war between them and a treaty of peace has been agreed to and ratified by having each party spit into a jar. As a lasting sign of the amity thenceforward to subsist between the parties, the gods form Kvasir out of this spittle, and endow him with special attributes described. However, the dwarves Fjalar and Galar murder him, clearly motivated by resentment of his superiority—their explanation to Æsir speaks volumes—but nonetheless create a magical mead from his blood, carrying his gifts into futurity. Poetry is henceforth called “Kvasir’s blood.”(136)

In this mythical scenario we may recognise not just a modelled scene of the origin of poetry, but also one of the origin of language and culture more generally, conditioned by the presence of violence and the omnipresence of *Cratos*. For Girard, this would doubtless be a clear-cut example of scapegoating and the subsequent transmutation of the victim into transcendent spiritual form. Gans, with his focus on the role of the sign and of representation, would perhaps take the analysis further, as poetry constitutes a developed form of representation and thus one of the means of deferring violence. Dumézil, who includes episodes from the war of Aslanders and Vanes in his general analysis of myths of violence, points out that a reconciliation and fusion of divine societies constitute proof of the existence of a “theory of composition,”(137) in the sense of an interconnected arrangement or composition of social structures, the function of which is to inhibit violence. Where it exists, in effective balance, texts will speak of a human or divine “harmonious society,” with peace and unity.

Peace and unity, for Generative Anthropology, is expressed more modestly as a deferral of violence, a temporally limited state of harmony, originated and strengthened by poetry as part of a system of representation which was developed out of an initial violence. Let us recall that poetics comes from the Greek word *poiein* which means “to make.” What was destroyed by violence is constructed, or reconstructed, by poetry. It is interesting to note that Martin Heidegger contends that “the essential beginning of poetry is “Mnemosyne,” *i. e.* “the primordial free salvation and preservation of Being, without which poetizing would even lack what is to be poetized.”(138)

Conclusions

The above considerations were intended to present the concept of *Cratos* as a cognitive and metaphoric understanding of human culture as originating in a deferral of violence and power. Dumézil’s selection of mythic narratives suggest that *Cratos* has been present in human consciousness from the very beginning. Its

dominant meaning is confirmed by Greek tradition and its code is also present in early Scandinavian mythology, connected to even more ancient Indo-European cultural roots. Dumézil describes and analyzes events recorded in ancient mythology, which tend to corroborate Gans's generative theory of culture. The comparison importantly reminds us that the origination of signs and the taming of violence are to be understood as parts of a cultural process that is transmitted and reflected in myth. Through his selection of texts and his interpretations, Dumézil gives myths a crucial place in our understanding of human development, from the scene of origin to the Indo-European world, with potential implications for every other culture world as well.

Each myth discussed above reproduces the initial situation of the appearance of language and culture. It turns out that Gans's scenic scheme appears deeply embedded in Dumézil's chosen texts, texts which refer constantly to the problem of violence and power. From his assembled evidence, Dumézil outlines the three social functions, and registers the extra significance, prominence and strength of the second, the military function. He thus answers, albeit intuitively, important questions about the way violence is inscribed in the idea of hierarchy and about the domination of one function over the other. The social structure constituted by the three functions confirms Gans's conceptual framework in *Generative Anthropology*: language and culture, ranging from the simplest to the most complex forms, is consecutive to the appearance of violence, whether immediately present, or deferred along with its associated inherent power. One has had to wait for Gans to elaborate the hidden message of Dumézil's work.

Dumézil presents a trifunctionality in which the second function of military violence is an intriguingly common factor. How could both violence and its wise control in the form of *Cratos* simultaneously co-exist in authority (or power)? He finds his answer in an ethical code that underlies the three functional formulae and expresses intuitive understandings embedded in long-term structures transmitted from ancient times. This is comparable to the ethical developments *Generative Anthropology* traces in the narrative of human history, where ancient principles of balance—of the egalitarian moral imperative established by the sharing of the first sign—are worked out in the ethics that respond to changing circumstances, as means are devised to try to keep the ever-present threat of rivalrous violence from destroying the human project.

Cratos as violence and power is inscribed in human consciousness and cognition. From the beginning of humanity up to the present times, this consciousness/cognition has resulted and continues to result in the production of signs, language and culture, all of which contribute, paradoxically enough, to the deferral of violence. This works even with the simplest meanings, and even with

those which thematize violence itself.

Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet said of Aeschylus that the great tragedian “was out to dramatize not history, but the present.”[\(139\)](#) This, too, is the goal of Generative Anthropology, even as it seeks the very earliest moments of human history. Contemporary culture does not lack for expressions of *Cratos*, the perennial symbol of controlled violence:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kratos_\(God_of_War\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kratos_(God_of_War))

Such simulacra of violence and power, exemplifying the cognition of the 21st Century but referring back to the ancient linguistic roots of *kratu*, thus gesture to a problem as old as human time, and to the ever-changing solutions to it we continue to devise.

Notes

1. C. Scott Littleton names Dumézil’s research fields as “The New Comparative Mythology”. See C. Scott Littleton, *The New Comparative Mythology*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1966. [\(back\)](#)
2. See. Georges Dumézil, “Soukhmanti Odykhmantievitch, le paladin aux coquelicots”, [in]: *Mélanges publiée en l’honneur de M.Paul Boyer*, Paris Librairie Honoré Champion, 1925 p. 280-288. [\(back\)](#)
3. See id.: “La préhistoire indo-iranienne des castes”. *Journal asiatique*, CCXVI, 1930, p. 109-130 and “ La préhistoire des flamines majeurs”, *Revue de l’histoire des religions*, CVIII, 1938, p. 188-220 , and his first book explicitly discovering three functions: *Mythes et dieux des Germains. Essai d’interprétation comparative*, Paris 1939. Most of books published throughout his career relate in one way or another to the theory of three social functions. [\(back\)](#)
4. Dumézil retains a Germanic model of *Rígsþula* (rex-magnus, bellatores, laboratores) which was first adopted by Franks and later transposed by Alfred the Great to Anglo-Saxons in the form of : rex/oratores, bellatores, laboratores). See Georges Dumézil, *Esquisses de mythologie*, Édition Gallimard, Paris 2003, p. 261. [\(back\)](#)
5. Jöel H. Grisward, Introduction. Il était trois fois [in] : *Mythe et épopée, I,II,III* Gallimard, Paris 1995, p. 16. [\(back\)](#)
6. Eric Gans, *The Origin of Language*, University of California Press, Berkeley, London, 1981, p.14. [\(back\)](#)

7. Udo Strutynsky, introduction : G.Dumézil, *Camillus. A Study of Indo-European Religion as a Roman History*, University of California Press, 1980, p. 2. [\(back\)](#)
8. See George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, *Metafory w naszym życiu*, Wydawnictwo Altheia, Warszawa 2010, p. 29. [\(back\)](#)
9. Ibidem p. 48-49, 119-128, 211-213. [\(back\)](#)
10. Ward Goodenough, "Cultural Anthropology and Linguistics" : [in] *Report of the Seventh Annual Roundtable Meeting on Linguistics and Language Study*, edited by Paul L. Garvin, Washington , DC, Georgetown University, 1957, p. 167. [\(back\)](#)
11. George Lakoff , Mark Johnson , *Metafory w naszym życiu* , , p. 296-297. [\(back\)](#)
12. See Eric Gans, *The End of Culture. Toward a Generative Anthropology*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1985, p. 125-126. [\(back\)](#)
13. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)
14. Ibidem., p.142. [\(back\)](#)
15. Paul Ricœur, *Symbolika zła*, Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, Warszawa, 1986, p.162. [\(back\)](#)
16. Danièle Chauvain, *Mémoire et myth : Questions de mythocritique. Dictionnaire*, D.Chauvain, A. Siganos, Ph. Walter (ed.), Editions Imago, Paris 2005, p. 232. [\(back\)](#)
17. Paul Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan, Beacon Paperback ed., Boston 1969 , p. 5. [\(back\)](#)
18. See. Klaus Eder, "The cultural code of modernity and the problem of nature: a critic of the naturalistic notion of progress "[in]: *Rethinking Progress. Movements, Forces and Ideas at the End of Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jeffrey C. Alexander, Piotr Sztompka, Unwin Hyman, London 1990, p.67-89. [\(back\)](#)
19. Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides* (transl. by A.Schuwer, R.Rojcewicz), Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis 1992, p. 11. [\(back\)](#)
20. Hesiod, *Theogony*, transl. by Richard S. Caldwell, Focus Classical Library, 1987, line 385-387. [\(back\)](#)
21. Aeschylus, *Prometheus*, ed. by Bound, David Green and Richmond Lattimore, The University of Chicago Press, 1991, line 1-80. [\(back\)](#)

22. Hesiod, *Theogony*. Works and Days Testimonials, ed. and transl. by Glenn W. Most, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London 2006, lines 383-404. [\(back\)](#)
23. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)
24. Aeschylus, *Persians, Seven Against Thebes, Suppliants, Prometheus Bound*, edited and translated by Alan H. Sommerstein, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, London 2008, p.445-455 (line 1-85). [\(back\)](#)
25. Zeus is pantocrator himself. [\(back\)](#)
26. Hesiod, *Theogony*. Works and Days Testimonials, ed. and transl. by Glenn W. Most, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London 2006, line 388. [\(back\)](#)
27. Ibidem, p. 445. [\(back\)](#)
28. Matt. 13 :35. René Girard, *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde*. Recherches avec Jean-Michael Oughourlian et Guy Lefort, Grasset 1978. [\(back\)](#)
29. Simon Goldhill, The language of tragedy: rhetoric and communication [in]: *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* , ed. by P.E.Easterling, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 136. [\(back\)](#)
30. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)
31. Georges Dumézil, *Esquisses de mythologie*, Éditions Gallimard, Paris 2003, p. 1089. [\(back\)](#)
32. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)
33. See, for example, Dumézil, *Le crime des Lemniennes. Rites et légendes du monde égéen*, P. Geuthner, Paris, 1924. To do more than gesture to the ways in which his and Gans's studies reinforce each other, however, would be too much to undertake here. [\(back\)](#)
34. Georges Dumézil speaks about " Indo-European civilisation" or "Indo- European civilisations" as an entity in the meaning of "Indo-European culture" or "cultures". [\(back\)](#)
35. Udo Strutynsky, Introduction to : Georges Dumézil, *Camillus. A Study of Indo-European Religion as Roman History*, Berkeley 1980, p. 1. [\(back\)](#)

36. Ibidem., p. 2. [\(back\)](#)

37. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)

38. Georges Dumézil is mainly concentrated on language origins in the context of the Indo-European linguistic family and the internal relations of particular Indo-European languages (Entretien avec Jacques Bonnet et Didier Pralon : *Georges Dumézil*, Paris 1981, p. 16). [\(back\)](#)

39. « Georges Dumézil : explorateur de nos origines », entretien recueilli par Alain de Benoist, présentation de Jean Varenne, *Le Figaro-dimanche*, 29-30 avril, 1978. [\(back\)](#)

40. Eric Gans, *The Origin of Language*, , p. 251. [\(back\)](#)

41. Eric Gans, *Signs of Paradox: Irony, Resentment, and Other Mimetic Structures*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1997, p. 6. [\(back\)](#)

42. Eric Gans, *The Origin of Language*, , p. 126. [\(back\)](#)

43. Ibidem., p.207. [\(back\)](#)

44. Ibidem. p. 208. [\(back\)](#)

45. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)

46. Dumézil was primary a philologist, inspired by linguistic studies of Michael Bréal, Ferdinand de Saussure, Antoine Meillet, Joseph Vendryes and also Émile Benveniste. He became a proponent of social understanding of linguistic facts. See J.-C. Milner, « Le programme dumézilien », in *Le Magazine littéraire*, N°229, avril 1986, p. 22 ; F. Dosse, *Histoire du structuralisme*, tome I : *Le champ du signe*, 1945-1966, Paris 1991, p. 56. [\(back\)](#)

47. Georges Dumézil, *Archaic Roman Religion*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1970, p. 103. [\(back\)](#)

48. Eric Gans, *The Origin of Language*, , p.249. [\(back\)](#)

49. Udo Strutynsky, Preface: Georges Dumézil, *Camillus*, , p. 3. [\(back\)](#)

50. Ibidem. p. 7. [\(back\)](#)

51. Milton Singer, *When A Great Tradition Modernizes. An Anthropological Approach to Indian Civilisation*, New York : Praeger, 1972 , p. 55-67. [\(back\)](#)

52. See the definition in depth in Halbfass's *Indie i Europa*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog, Warszawa 2008, p. 233. ([back](#))
53. See Wilhelm Halbfass, *Indie i Europa*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog, Warszawa, 2008. ([back](#))
54. Udo Strutynski, Preface: Georges Dumézil, *Camillus. A Study of Indo-European Religion as a Roman History*, Berkeley 1980, p. 34 . ([back](#))
55. See Chapter II : Magdalena Złocka-Dąbrowska, *Analyse de l'œuvre de Georges Dumézil, un maître à penser*, Wyd. Naukowe GRADO, Toruń 2013. ([back](#))
56. Joël Grisward, Introduction. *Il était trois fois...: Georges Dumézil, Mythe et Épopée*, Quatro, Gallimard, Paris 1995, p. 10. ([back](#))
57. See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (ed. von Klenner, Hermann), Meiner Verlag, Hamburg 2005, p. 673. ([back](#))
58. See Eric Gans, *The Origin of Language*, p. 49. ([back](#))
59. Eric Gans, *The End of Culture. Toward a Generative Anthropology*, p. 239. ([back](#))
60. Georges Dumézil, *Mythe et Épopée I.II.III*, Éditions Gallimard, Paris, 1995. ([back](#))
61. See Georges Dumézil, *L'héritage indo-européen à Rome*, Paris 1949, p. 30; *Heur et malheur du guerrier*, Paris 1985, p. 11; *Mythes et dieux des Indo-Européens*, p. 16. ([back](#))
62. See Bruno Latour, *On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods*, Duke University Press, 2010. ([back](#))
63. See especially : *Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus I* (Paris 1941), *Naissance de Rome. Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus II* (Paris 1944), *Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus IV* (Paris 1948), *L'héritage indo-européen à Rome* (Paris 1949), *Déeses latines et mythes védiques* (Bruxelles 1956), *Idées romaines* (Paris 1969). ([back](#))
64. See especially : G. Dumézil, *Mythes et dieux des Germains*, Paris 1939 ; *Les dieux des Germains*, Paris 1959; *Myth et Épopée I.II.III*, Éditions Gallimard, Paris 1995. ([back](#))
65. Already in 1934, Georges Dumézil described Indra as a “warrior of massacre” opposite to Varuna but as a royal god (Georges Dumézil , *Ouranos-Varuna. Étude de*

mythologie comparée indo-européenne, Adrien- Maisonneuve, Paris 1934, p. 40) and in the next works Indra is presented as a warrior (Georges Dumézil, *L'idéologie tripartite des Indo-Européense*, Bruxelles, 1958, p. 39-40 [\(back\)](#)

66. Georges Dumézil, *Mitra Varuna. Essai sur deux représentations indo-européennes de la Souveraineté*, Press universitaires de France, Paris 1940, p. 44. This book elaborated already in 1937, before announcement of the theory of three social function (in 1938) presents a concept of bi-partition of sovereignty but image of Varuna is also related to the second function. [\(back\)](#)

67. Georges Dumézil, *Mythe et Épopée I.II.III*, op.cit., p. 75. [\(back\)](#)

68. Georges Dumézil, *Archaic Roman Religion*, vol. I, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1970, p. 206. [\(back\)](#)

69. Georges Dumézil, *Aspects de la fonction guerrière chez les indo-Européens*, Presses universitaires de France, Paris 1956, p. 15-61, *L'idéologie tripartite des Indo-Européens*, Latomus, Bruxelles, 1958, p. 83-86, *Heur et malheur du guerrier*, Presses universitaires de France, Paris 1969, p. 11-50. [\(back\)](#)

70. Georges Dumézil, *Camillus. A Study of Indo-European Religion as a Roman History*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1980, p. 43. [\(back\)](#)

71. Ibidem., p. 1. [\(back\)](#)

72. Georges Dumézil, *Mythe et Épopée I.II.III*, op.cit., p. 246. [\(back\)](#)

73. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)

74. Ibidem., p. 266. [\(back\)](#)

75. Dumézil refers to the French Huguenot, Louis de Beaufort, tutor to the prince of Hess-Homburg and member of the Royal Society of London, who in a book published at The Hague in 1738 coordinated and amplified Roman sources and expressed all his doubts in this area. Dumézil bases his notices on *Dissertation sur l'incertitude des cinq premiers siècles de l'histoire romaine* (new ed). With introduction and notes, by A. Blot (Paris, 1886); See: Georges Dumézil, *Archaic Roman Religion with the Appendix on the Religion of the Etruscans*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1970, p. 3. [\(back\)](#)

76. This story has many other explanations, including male-female conflict and competition what we may call as well a rivalry. [\(back\)](#)

77. This subject belongs to the area of René Girard studies. See also the discussion on *de origine regni* by Jacek Banaszkiwicz in : *Polskie dzieje bajeczne mistrza Wincentego Kadłubka*, Wydawnictwo Leopoldinum, Wrocław 1998, pp. 5-45. ([back](#))
78. Known from Scandinavian, Indian and also Slavic mythical history described in the early medieval chronicles (See. Jacek Banaszkiwicz, *Polskie dzieje bajeczne mistrza Wincentego Kadłubka*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2002). ([back](#))
79. Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1939. ([back](#))
80. Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1959. English translation: *Gods of the Ancient Northmen*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1973. ([back](#))
81. Georges Dumézil, *Esquisses de mythologie*, Quarto Gallimard, Paris, 2003. ([back](#))
82. Georges Dumézil, *Bogowie Germanów*, Oficyna Naukowa, Warszawa 2006, p. 84-85. ([back](#))
83. Ibidem. p. 83. ([back](#))
84. See Georges Dumézil, *L'idéologie tripartite des Indo-Européens*, Latomus, Bruxelles, 1958. ([back](#))
85. Eric Gans, *The End of Culture. Toward a Generative Anthropology*, p. 228 ([back](#))
86. Jacek Banaszkiwicz, O Dumézilu i jego badaniach- bardzo krótko [in]: Georges Dumézil, *Bogowie Germanów*, Oficyna Naukowa, Warszawa 2006, p. XIII. ([back](#))
87. Eric Gans, *The End of Culture. Toward a Generative Anthropology*, p. 241. ([back](#))
88. Ibidem., p. 240. ([back](#))
89. Georges Dumézil, *Esquisses de mythologie*, p. 867. ([back](#))
90. Ibidem. ([back](#))
91. Georges Dumézil, *Mythe et Épopée, I.II.III*, p. 250. ([back](#))
92. This particular story appears many times in Dumézil's books, already mentioned in: *Mythes et dieux des Germains* (1938, p. 93-105), *Les dieux des Germains*(1959), p. 16-20, but also in *Esquisses de mythologies* (2006, p. 868-878). The above phrase comes from : *Bogowie Germanów* (2006, p. 16). ([back](#))

93. It has its Indian (*Mahabharata*) and Iranian (*Avesta*) equivalents. [\(back\)](#)
94. Anna Załuska- Strömberg, Wstęp : *Edda poetycka*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1986, p. XXVI. [\(back\)](#)
95. Georges Dumézil, *Gods of the Ancient Northmen*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles , 1973. p.16 Georges Dumézil, *Bogowie Germanów*, Oficyna Naukowa, Warszawa 2006, p.84-85. [\(back\)](#)
96. Georges Dumézil, *Esquisses de mythologie*, Éditions Gallimard, Paris 2003, p. 867. [\(back\)](#)
97. Ibidem., p. 868. [\(back\)](#)
98. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)
99. Eric Gans, *The Origin of Language*, p. 14. [\(back\)](#)
100. Ibidem., p. 13. [\(back\)](#)
101. Georges Dumézil, *Esquisses de mythologie*, 867. [\(back\)](#)
102. Ynglinga Saga, or the Story of the Yngling Family from Odin to Halfdon the Black, Saga I, Chapter IV, [in] : *The Heimskringla or Chronicle of the Kings of Norway* (translated from the Icelandic of Snorro Sturleson by Samuel Laing, ESQ), Vol I, Longman, Brown, Green-Longman, London 1844, p.218-291. French version of the same text : Georges Dumézil, *Esquisses de mythologie*, p. 869- 870. [\(back\)](#)
103. Georges Dumézil, *Esquisses de mythologie*, p. 869. [\(back\)](#)
104. Eric Gans, *The End of Culture*, p. 240. [\(back\)](#)
105. Voir especially: Marcel Mauss, Szkic o darze [in] *Socjologia i antropologia*, Wydawnictwo KR, Warszawa 2001, p. 182-190, and Bronisław Malinowski, *Argonauci Zachodniego Pacyfiku: relacje o poczynaniach i przygodach krajowców z nowej Gwinei*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa, 2005. [\(back\)](#)
106. Georges Dumézil, *Esquisses de mythologie*, op.cit., p. 869. [\(back\)](#)
107. See Gans's explication of these principles in *The End of Culture*, , p.240. [\(back\)](#)
108. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)
109. Ibidem., p. 227-300. [\(back\)](#)

110. Eric Gans, *The End of Culture*, p. 14. [\(back\)](#)
111. Ibidem, p. 13. [\(back\)](#)
112. This distinction is, at bottom, what differentiates Gans from Girard, for whom the victim himself was sufficient. *The Origin of Language*, p. 36. [\(back\)](#)
113. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)
114. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)
115. Ibidem., p. 267. [\(back\)](#)
116. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)
117. Ibidem. p. 20. [\(back\)](#)
118. Eric Gans, *The End of Culture*, p. 40. [\(back\)](#)
119. Ibidem., p. 228. [\(back\)](#)
120. Georges Dumézil, *Esquisses de mythologie*, p. 873. [\(back\)](#)
121. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)
122. Eric Gans, *The Origin of Language*, p. 228. [\(back\)](#)
123. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)
124. Ibidem., p.13. [\(back\)](#)
125. Ibidem., p. 10. [\(back\)](#)
126. Ibidem., p. 13. [\(back\)](#)
127. See Eric Gans, *The End of Culture*, pp. 226-268. [\(back\)](#)
128. Ibidem., p. 254. [\(back\)](#)
129. Ibidem., p. 239. [\(back\)](#)
130. That is to say, social or explicitly human resentment, as opposed to the originary resentment of the first scene, which was directed at the suddenly unattainable object of desire itself, rather than at other members of the nascent community. [\(back\)](#)

131. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)

132. Ibidem. [\(back\)](#)

133. Ian Dennis points out the similarity here to Girard's analysis of the ancient system of sacred differences and boundaries, which is also founded on violence, indeed on "scapegoating." Both Girard and Dumézil offer clear-eyed depictions, in short, of the "oppressive" measures earlier human societies deployed to restrain rivalrous violence, and both scholars have been rewarded, in an era where human culture has developed the capacity to manage much freer movements of desire, with accusations of a sympathy for fascism. Such accusations are entirely unfair. Girard, for his part, attributes exactly our ability to see—and develop beyond—this system to the influence of Christianity. Dumézil and Gans offer comparable narratives. (Personal communication, August 2016.) [\(back\)](#)

134. Ibidem, p. 12. [\(back\)](#)

135. *The Prose Edda, Skáldskaparmál*, Snorri Sturluson, The Poesy of the Skalds, Poetical Diction, translated by Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur, 1916. Guðni Jónsson edition, Chapter I. French version of the same text in Georges Dumézil, *Esquisses de mythologie*, p.870. [\(back\)](#)

136. Ibidem., p. 870-873. [\(back\)](#)

137. "La guerre puis la fusion des Ases et des Vanes illustre une théorie de la composition, donc de la formation d'une société harmonieuse quelle qu'elle soit, humaine ou divine." (*Esquisses...p.874*). [\(back\)](#)

138. Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. by André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis 1992, p. 127. [\(back\)](#)

139. Jean-Pierre Vernant, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, Zone Books, New York 1990, p. 259 [\(back\)](#)