Ion (Euripides) and Karna (Mahabharat, Sanga Ilakkiyam) - Deconstruction of Binary Oppositions

By D Pugazhendhi[*]

"Ion" is a Greek play authored by Euripides depicting the story of Ion. The "Mahabharata" is an epic written in both the Tamil and Sanskrit languages. The story of Karna is one of the sub plots in this epic. In the Greek play, Creusa who is impregnated by Apollo, the Sun God, keeps Ion in a casket together with a breast plate for his protection. In the Tamil myth, Kunti who is impregnated by the Sun God places her son Karna in a casket and sets it afloat in a river to conceal the birth of the child. Regarding the breast plate in this story, it is shown that Karna was born with the breast plate glued to his breast. Creusa, the mother of Ion, had had an illegitimate son born to her before marriage and remains childless for a long time after getting married to another person. Kunti too gave birth to a son before marriage and remains childless for a long time with her lawful husband. After that, Creusa had offspring by the grace of the God and Kunti too had offspring by the boon of the Gods. Thus, the parallels of binary oppositions and deconstruction are seen in these two myths. Noble birth and low birth, men and women, willing and out of compulsion, happiness and unhappiness are some of the binary oppositions. Theism and Atheism, biological mother and step mother are some of the deconstructions of binary opposition. This article deals with the parallels seen between these two myths, identifying the binary oppositions in these myths and deconstructing the binary oppositions by identifying their instabilities.

Keywords: *Ion, Karna, myth, Sanskrit, Tamil*

Introduction

Myths are mostly seen as imaginary literature. Myths are linked with history. 'Ion', a Greek play written by Euripides consists of the myth of 'Ion'. The author relates this myth of Ion within the history of the Ionians and Asians. Here in the Asian myth, Karna has some resemblances with the myth of Ion. Further, both the myths can be analysed from the standpoint of mythological theory called binary opposition.

Ion – Play

Iōn - Ἴων is an ancient Greek play written by Euripides between 414 and 412 BC. It narrates about an orphan Ion who was in search of his origin. Some scholars lay their emphasis on saying that the myth of 'Ion' is not only a simple play, but it

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[*]Associate Professor, Tamil Nadu Chennai Nandhanam Government Arts College, India.

shows the search of identity of the race of the origin (Hall 1997, Meltzer 2006).[1] This play highlights many myths of Ion, among which one of the myths of Ion has resemblance with the myth related to Karna of Mahabharata.

The Myth of Mahabharata

Tamil is an ancient classical language which has its first available literature called the Sangam literature. One of the poems of the Tamil Sangam literature mentions about the Mahabharata war as the war between five brothers versus hundreds of men (Tamil Virtual University 1995b).

> Greatness who gave unlimited food, until those hundred men wearing golden thumpai flower garlands had seized the land and perished in the field fighting furiously against the five whose horses wore swaying plumes!
> Puranānūru 2, Poet Muranjiyūr Mudinākanār
> Sang to Chēramān Perunchōtru Uthiyan Chēralāthan

Thus, this reference mentions the war that took place between hundreds of men and five brothers. There is a reference to the Tamil king Chēramān providing food to both the armies. It means in a way that the war took place near his kingdom. This Tamil king Chēramān is denoted as 'Κηπροβότρου - Cerobothra' in Greek (Wilfred 1912). Another Tamil king, Pāndiyan, also took part in the war. He is denoted as 'Πανδίονος – Pandion' in Greek (Wilfred 1912). He fought on the side of the five brothers (Tamil Virtual University 1995b).

> The five brothers praised Pandion Nedun Chezhiyan's war skill
> Line 775, Mathuraikkānji
> Poet Manggudi Maruthanar, Sang to Pandion Nedun Chezhiyan

> The war bull of five brothers
> Puranānūru 58,
> Poet Kāviripoompattinathu Kāri Kannanār
> Sang to Pāndiyan Velliampalathu Thunjiya Peruvaluthi

Thus these references are the proof for the relation of the historical tradition of the Tamil king called Pandion (Πανδίονος) in the myth of Mahabharata. This myth was then written as an epic by a Tamil poet 'Baratham Paadiya Perun Devanar' with 12,000 verses, of which only about 830 remain available. 'Baratham Paadiya Perun Devanar' means a great poet who had written the epic Mahabharata in Tamil around 300 BC.

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[1]Although Ion is a relatively obscure mythological figure, Euripides does make several innovations which bring together the two competing versions of Athenian identity. One foundation story highlights the Athenians as Ionians, who were one of the main (but less noteworthy) migratory Greek peoples. The story provides convenient justification for Athenian domination over the largely Ionian empire.

Sanskrit Mahabharata

The authorship of the Sanskrit Mahabharata is attributed to Vyasa. He was black in complexion[2] so was called Krishna and because of his relation with water bodies, he was called as Dwaipayana. The other name is Vyasa meaning the divider or arranger of text. So, when he wrote the epic in Sanskrit he was denoted as Krishna-Dwaipayana or Vyasa (Ganguli 1896).

> The sage Krishna-Dwaipayana completed his work in three years, raising from bed very early in the day and purifying himself and performing his ascetic devotions, he composed this Mahabharata.
> Section LXII, Adivansavatarana Parva, Book I, The Mahabharata

> And the child of Parasara so born of me in my maidenhood hath become a great Rishi endowed with large ascetic powers and known by the name of Dwaipayana (the island-born). That illustrious Rishi having by his ascetic power divided the Vedas into four parts hath come to be called on earth by the name of Vyasa (the divider or arranger), and for his dark colour, Krishna (the dark).
> Section CV, Sambhava Parva, Book I, The Mahabharata

His Sanskrit work consists of over 100,000 śloka, or over 200,000 individual verse lines, and about 1.8 million words in total. It also ensures the thoughts of Tamil Sangam literature (Tamil Virtual University 1995) (Kisari Mohan Ganguli 1896).

> Pandya, who dwelt on the coast-land near the sea, came accompanied by troops of various kinds to Yudhishthira, the king of kings. And, O king, when all these troops had assembled, his army, finely dressed and exceedingly strong, assumed an appearance pleasant to the eye.
> Section XIX, Udyoga Parva, Book 5, The Mahabharata

This reference ensures that the historical Tamil king Pandion or Pandyan (Πανδίονος) fought on the side of the five brothers where he fought against a king called Karna (Ganguli 1896).

> Pandya at the time of slaughtering the army of Karna and that force, swelling with cars, steeds and teeming with foremost of foot-soldiers, struck by Pandya, began to turn round like the potter's wheel. Like the wind dispersing a mass of congregated clouds, Pandya, with his well shot arrows, began to disperse that force, destroying its steeds, drivers. standards, cars and causing its weapons and elephants to fall down. Like the splitter of mountains striking down mountains with his thunder, Pandya overthrew elephants with their riders, having previously cut down the standards, banners and weapons with which they were armed, as also the foot-soldiers that protected those beasts. And he cut down horses, and horsemen with their darts and lances and quivers.
> Section XX, Karna Parva, Book 8, The Mahabharata

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[2]Normally Tamilians are black in colour.

This Karna who is one of the warriors in this myth has some parallels with the Greek myth of Ion. These resemblances can be seen based on the mythological theory of binary opposition.

Binary Opposition

Binary means dual. These duals are opposite each other, and at the same time, both depend on each other which are called 'pairs of binary opposition'. There are also thoughts of deconstruction of binary oppositions. The basic idea behind opposition theory is ancient, going back to philosophies based on dualism, such as Aristotle's logical dualism (Ogden 1932, Bocheński 1961, Deely 2001) and Plato[3] in Greek and Kambar[4] in Tamil. In recent decades, it has been developed as a theory. Initially, it is categorized under the category of semantic opposition (Ahmadi 1992) in the theories of linguistics.[5] It is also rooted in the mythological and cultural beliefs. According to the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, binary opposition is a mytheme by which human outlook sees the nature of the universe as groups of contradictory dyadic images (Levi-Strauss 1979). In construction philosophy, the majority of concepts have been created based on binary oppositions. Constructionists believe that the nature and real origin of things are not in them, but the relations created among them are only our perceptions. That is, literary meanings are not produced in isolation, but in their relation to other concepts; to the larger context inside and outside the literary work. Thus, binary opposition deals with how the opposite units operate a myth (Aimukhambet 2017). These opposite pairs are in an area, which usually show the dominance of one over the other (Ghiyasi and Mahmoodi 2015). When binary relationships are understood as 'A/not-A', 'women' are defined as 'not men', black is defined as 'not white' and 'old' is defined as 'not young'. These kinds of pairings tend to imply that the second category ('not-A') is inferior and subordinate to the first, and distinguished not by its own substantive content and value, but only by its difference from the first category and the absence of those qualities that define 'A' (Painter 2005).

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[3][420e] For in like manner we could1 clothe the farmers in robes of state and deck them with gold and bid them cultivate the soil at their pleasure, and we could make the potters recline on couches from left to right before the fire drinking toasts and feasting with their wheel alongside to potter with when they are so disposed, and we can make all the others happy in the same fashion, so that thus the entire city may be happy.
Plato. Republic (Shorey 1969).
[4]No benevolence as no penurious to beg
No intrepidity as no foe to battle
No veracity as no falsity to trick
No nescience as questions galore.
53, Nattu Padalam, Bala kandam,
Kamba Ramayanam
(Tamil Virtual University 1995a).
[5]Binary opposition is the means by which the units of language have value or meaning; each unit is defined in reciprocal determination with another term, as in binary code. It is not a contradictory relation but, a structural, complementary one (de Saussure 2011).

Thus, in the binary opposition, the first term is the 'master', which is superior to the second, and the second term is the 'unreal representation' or the inferior of the first. This tradition is called logocentrism and it is used to explain the assumption of a privilege attributed to the first term and 'disgraceful' to the second. This leads to the deconstruction of binary opposition.

Deconstruction of Binary Oppositions

In binary opposition, the first term is superior to the second term. Deconstruction of binary opposition argues that there is no first term superior to the second term. There is no absolute evil in the world; evil is relative. Snake poison is life to the snake, but it is lethal in relation to man. The sea is a garden to the marine animals; to the creatures of earth, it is dangerous. The benefit and harm of each depend on the place, time, situation and need. In day and night, for instance, night is typically conceived by people as being "absence of daylight", while day is never conceived analogous to "absence of darkness". So, it becomes obvious that polar concepts related to each other in terms of a "marked" relation — night is marked with respect to day, which is perceived to be the "default" or "present" concept in the opposition. Derrida (1982) had made a valid point. In pairs, such as day and night, it is easy to accept day as the unmarked form and night as its marked counterpart. This does not mean that one is more basic than the other in any absolute sense, rather, it is perceived to be that way for a historical or psychological reason. Markedness is hardly a phenomenon of nature. Nature makes no social distinction between right-handed and left-handed individuals, nor associates negative and positive values accordingly; people do. In a society where left-handedness is the norm (should there be one), then the marked pole would be right in the oppositional scale. As can be seen by examining the opposition sets above, determining which member of a pair is the unmarked form and which one the marked one is a matter of tradition and history (Danesi 2009). Thus the deconstruction of binary opposition has been put forward as a theory.

Deconstruction means dismantling, but it does not refer to a demolition that ended in monism or emptiness. Further, it is not an interpretation method completed with a set of argumentative and anti-coherent concepts. Indeed, deconstruction is opposed to anti-method, anti-argumentation, and anti-coherence. Deconstruction of binary opposition opposes the logocentrism of binary opposition and also opposes that the first term is superior to the second term in the binary opposition.

Binary Opposition and the Play Ion

There are many binary oppositions in the play 'Ion'. Among these, some of them are maintained and some of them are deconstructed. Theism – Atheism is

one of the binary oppositions[6] which has been mainly dealt with in this play. The God and his palace are thought to be sacred, holy and safe. This play has raised questions on these thoughts.

φεῦ.	Ion
δεινόν γε, θνητοῖς τοὺς νόμους ὡς οὐ καλῶς	Ah! It is strange that the god has given to men these laws, not well or with wise thought; the wicked should not sit at the altar, (1315) but should be driven from there; nor is it good for a worthless hand to touch the gods; for the righteous—those who have been wronged should sit in sanctuary; the good and bad should not go to the same place and have equal treatment from the gods.
ἔθηκεν ὁ θεὸς οὐδ᾽ ἀπὸ γνώμης σοφῆς:	
τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ἀδίκους βωμὸν οὐχ ἵζειν ἐχρῆν,	
(1315) ἀλλ᾽ ἐξελαύνειν: οὐδὲ γὰρ ψαύειν καλὸν	
θεῶν πονηρὰν χεῖρα: τοῖσι δ᾽ ἐνδίκοις —	
ἱερὰ καθίζειν, ὅστις ἠδικεῖτ᾽, ἐχρῆν:	
καὶ μὴ 'πὶ ταὐτὸ τοῦτ᾽ ἰόντ᾽ ἔχειν ἴσον	
τόν τ᾽ ἐσθλὸν ὄντα τόν τε μὴ θεῶν πάρα.	(Potter 1938)
(Murray 1913)	

These statements have appreciated the holiness of God. And these are related with Theism. In the same way, this play has given place to Atheism.

Πρεσβύτης	Tutor
κᾆτ᾽ ἐξέκλεψας πῶς Ἀπόλλωνος γάμους;	And then how did you conceal Apollo's rape?

Κρέουσα	Creusa
(941) Φοίβῳ ξυνῆψ᾽ ἄκουσα δύστηνον γάμον.	Unwillingly, I formed an unhappy union with Phoebus.
(Murray 1913)	(Potter 1938)

Κρέουσα	Creusa
(338) Φοίβῳ μιγῆναί φησί τις φίλων ἐμῶν.	(338) One of my friends says that she had intercourse with Apollo.
Ἴων	Ion
Φοίβῳ γυνὴ γεγῶσα; μὴ λέγ᾽, ὦ ξένη.	A woman with Apollo? Do not say that, stranger!
(Murray 1913)	(Potter 1938)

Ἴων	Ion
τί δὲ στυγεῖς σὺ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ φίλτατα;	(287) Why do you hate the place very dear to the god?
Κρέουσα	Creusa
οὐδέν: ξύνοιδ᾽ ἄντροισιν αἰσχύνην τινά.	No reason; I know of a shameful deed in a cave.
(Murray 1913)	(Potter 1938)

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[6]Theism is broadly defined as the belief in the existence of a supreme being or deities. Atheism is commonly understood as non-acceptance or rejection of theism in the broadest sense of theism, i.e. non-acceptance or rejection of belief in God or Gods.

Ἴων
ἔκλειπε βωμὸν καὶ θεηλάτους ἔδρας.
Κρέουσα
τὴν σὴν ὅπου σοι μητέρ᾽ ἐστὶ νουθέτει.
Ἴων
σὺ δ᾽ οὐχ ὑφέξεις ζημίαν, κτείνουσ᾽ ἐμέ;
Κρέουσα
ἤν γ᾽ ἐντὸς ἀδύτων τῶνδέ με σφάξαι
θέλῃς.
Ἴων
(1310) τίς ἡδονή σοι θεοῦ θανεῖν ἐν
στέμμασι;
Κρέουσα
λυπήσομέν τιν᾽, ὧν λελυπήμεσθ᾽ ὕπο.
(Murray 1913)

Ion
(1306) Leave the altar and the seats dedicated to the god.
Creusa
Give advice to your mother, wherever she is.
Ion
Will you not submit to punishment, you who were going to kill me?
Creusa
Yes, if you are willing to slaughter me in this shrine.
Ion
(1310) What pleasure is it for you to die among the garlands of the god?
Creusa
I shall give pain to one who has given me pain.
(Potter 1938)

Thus, these statements have raised questions of the beliefs in God and leads to Atheism. In this way, this play attempts to deconstruct some of the traditional binary pairs. In the same way, there are many binary oppositions and the deconstruction of binary oppositions seen in the play 'Ion'. Some of these also have parallels with the myth of Karna.

Ion and Karna – Characterization

Noble birth and low birth are the two poles of binary opposition. The play Ion discussed much about this binary opposition.

Ἴων
γενναιότης σοι, καὶ τρόπων τεκμήριον
τὸ σχῆμ᾽ ἔχεις τόδ᾽, ἥτις εἶ ποτ᾽, ὦ γύναι.
γνοίη δ᾽ ἂν ὡς τὰ πολλά γ᾽ ἀνθρώπου πέρι
(240) τὸ σχῆμ᾽ ἰδών τις εἰ πέφυκεν
εὐγενής.

Ion
There is nobility in you, and you have an appearance that is a witness to your character, lady, whoever you are. For most men at least, you would know from their appearance if they are well-born. (240)

In this way Ion also related with this binary opposition. Ion, who is the son of Apollo, is the main character in the play. Euripides naming his play 'Ion' shows the important place he has given to this character.

Ἴων
(1476) ……..μῆτερ, πόθεν;
Κρέουσα
(1482) παρ᾽ ἀηδόνιον πέτραν
Φοίβῳ —
(Murray 1913)

Ion
(1476) …. Mother, who was my father?
Creusa
(1482) By the nightingale's rock, Apollo—
(Potter 1938)

Karna

Karna is the sub-character in the myth of Mahabharat. He is picturized as son of Sun God (Ganguli 1896).

Karna, …. Begotten by the Sun himself,…… And that foremost of eloquent men, the offspring of the Sun.
Section CXXXVIII, Sambhava Parva, Book I, The Mahabharata

Here Karna is the son of Sun and Ion is the son of Apollo. Phoibos is the surname of Apollo. Phoibos means 'the shining or brilliant', which is frequently applied to the Sun. Thus Ion and Karna both are sons of the Sun God. In this way, both have resemblances in their myths and is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Sons of Sun God – Ion and Karna*

Background of the Birth – Ion

Even though Ion is the son of Apollo, his birth is not a legitimate birth, as he was born by the abuse of his mother Creusa by Apollo.

Κρέουσα	Creusa
ὦ ψυχά, πῶς σιγάσω;	O my soul, how shall I be silent?
(860) πῶς δὲ σκοτίας ἀναφήνω	(860) But how shall I reveal the
εὐνάς, αἰδοῦς δ᾽ ἀπολειφθῶ;	hidden bed, and depart from shame?
(Murray 1913)	(Potter 1938)

Thus the birth situation of Ion is related with illegitimacy, religiosity and forcefulness. Here there is a need to see the background of the birth of Karna.

Background of the Birth – Karna

Even though Karna is the son of the Sun God, his birth did not take place under legalised situation. His mother Kunti gave birth to him before her legalised marriage. For this reason she had a boon given by the religious people and was put to test for the boon (Ganguli 1896).

'Thus addressed by the Brahmana, the amiable Kunti (Pritha) became curious, and in her maidenhood summoned the god Arka (Sun). And as soon as he pronounced the Mantra, she beheld that effulgent deity--that beholder of everything in the world--approaching her.
Section CXI, Sambhava Parva, Book I, The Mahabharata

O fortunate one, with thee! By this mantra (that I am about to give thee), thou shall be able to summon (to thy side) whatever celestials thou likest. And, by their grace, shall thou also obtain children.' Thus addressed, the girl (a little while after), seized with curiosity, summoned, during the period of her maiden-hood, the god Surya. And the lord of light thereupon made her conceive and begot on her a son who became the first of all wielders of weapons.
Section LXVII, Sambhava Parva, Book I, The Mahabharata

Thus Kunti tested her boon, and she had a baby from the God without legitimate marriage. Thus the birth situation of Karna is related with religion and illegal acceptance. In this way, Ion and Karna both have resemblance with minute variation. The resemblances can be looked at based on the binary opposition of mythological theory.

Ion and Birth – Binary Opposition

Ion was born to Apollo as his son. This birth is considered to be very high, but was illegal. The people living around do not know about his father Apollo. So his birth was illegitimate in the eyes of the common man which is mentioned in several places in this play.

Ἴων
(1477) αἰαῖ: πέφυκα δυσγενής. μῆτερ, πόθεν;
(Murray 1913)

Ion
Alas! I am low-born. Mother, who was my father?
(Potter 1938)

Ἴων
(309) τοῦ θεοῦ καλοῦμαι δοῦλος εἰμί τ᾽, ὦ γύναι.
Ἴων
(325) ἀδίκημά του γυναικὸς ἐγενόμην ἴσως.
(Murray 1913)

Ion
(309) I am called the slave of the god, lady.
Ion
(325) Perhaps my birth is some woman's wrong.
(Potter 1938)

Ἴων
(582)……..πατρός τ᾽ ἐπακτοῦ καὐτὸς ὢν νοθαγενής.
καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἔχων τοὔνειδος, ἀσθενὴς μὲν ὢν —
(Murray 1913)

Ion
….. my father a foreigner, and myself of bastard birth. And with this reproach, if I am insignificant,
(Potter 1938)

Here there is a binary opposition because of the illegitimate birth given by God. Though his birth is considered high by relating with God, it is cursed by people as an illegitimate child portraying his birth as very low.

(580) δυοῖν κεκλήσῃ δυσγενὴς πένης θ᾽ ἅμα, ἀλλ᾽ εὐγενής τε καὶ πολυκτήμων βίου. (Murray 1913)	(580) you will not be called ill-born and poor, but well-born and rich. (Potter 1938)

Practically a human born as a son of God is hard to believe. So here it is argued that he is said to be the son of God only to hide his illegitimate birth.

μὴ σφαλεῖσ᾽ ἃ παρθένοις ἐγγίγνεται νοσήματ᾽ ἐς κρυπτοὺς γάμους, (1525) ἔπειτα τῷ θεῷ προστίθης τὴν αἰτίαν, καὶ τοὐμὸν αἰσχρὸν ἀποφυγεῖν πειρωμένη, Φοίβῳ τεκεῖν με φῇς, τεκοῦσ᾽ οὐκ ἐκ θεοῦ; (Murray 1913)	—an affliction that happens to girls; (1525) and now you ascribe the blame to the god and attempt to escape the shame of my birth by saying that you bore me to Phoebus, when your lover was not a god? (Potter 1938)

Karna and Birth – Binary Opposition

Karna's birth is considered high because he was born to the Sun God. But his birth is unlawful and the people around cannot accept that his father is the Sun God. So his birth was treated as being lowly. It is mentioned in several places in this myth (Ganguli 1896).

> 'O mighty-armed one, thou too must tell us thy lineage and the names of thy father and mother and the royal line of which thou art the ornament.'
> Section CXXXVIII, Sambhava Parva, Book 1, The Mahabharata

Thus the lineage of Karna was questioned in the assembly of the Kings. The facial expression of Karna is shown as follows.

> Karna's countenance became like unto a lotus pale and torn with the pelting showers in the rainy season.
> Section CXXXVIII, Sambhava Parva, Book 1, The Mahabharata
> even as a dog doth not deserve the butter placed before the sacrificial fire.
> Section CXXXVIII, Sambhava Parva, Book 1, The Mahabharata

Thus in several places Karna was disheartened. His victory was also rejected due to his lowly birth, his wishful bride also rejected him as a suitor in marriage.

> But seeing Karna, Draupadi loudly said, 'I will not select a Sutra for my lord.' Then Karna, laughing in vexation and casting glance at the Sun, threw aside the bow already drawn to a circle.
> Section CLXXXIX, Swayamvara Parva, Book 1, The Mahabharata

> O mother, I was abandoned by thee as soon as I was born. This great injury, involving risk to life itself, that thou didst me, hath been destructive of my achievements and fame.
> Section CXLVI, Udyoga Parva, Book 5, The Mahabharata

Thus, in several places Karna, a high born, faces humiliation as a low born. Both Ion and Karna, though high born, face the disrespect of being low born. This resemblance based on the binary opposition of 'Noble birth and low birth' is seen in both these myths as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. *Binary Opposition – Noble Birth and Low Birth*
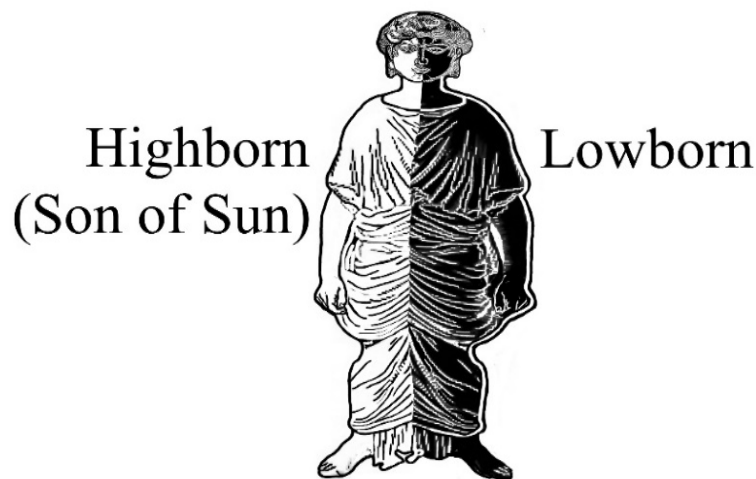
In this way Ion and Karna have similarities in that the Sun God had fathered both of them, yet of unlawful birth, and this we see as mythological theory of binary opposition.

Child and Casket

Birth of the child is an event to celebrate and enjoy. All the relatives of the child such as the parents and grandparents happily celebrate the memorable occasion by sharing and spreading happiness to others. They lay the infant in a cradle which rocks but is immobile. These are events and motions not seen in illegitimate births. The situation instead is surrounded only by sadness, fear and the regret in such an event.

Ion and Casket

Creusa unlawfully eloped with Apollo and gave birth to Ion. This unlawful incident leads to another situation.

(30) κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν — οἶσθα γὰρ θεᾶς πόλιν — λαβὼν βρέφος νεογνὸν ἐκ κοίλης πέτρας αὐτῷ σὺν ἄγγει σπαργάνοισί θ᾽ οἷς ἔχει ἔνεγκε Δελφῶν τἀμὰ πρὸς χρηστήρια, καὶ θὲς πρὸς αὐταῖς εἰσόδοις δόμων ἐμῶν.(Murray 1913)	(30) of glorious Athens, for you know the city of the goddess; take the new-born baby from the hollow rock, with his cradle and baby-clothes; bring him to my shrine at Delphi, and place him at the very entrance of my temple; (Potter 1938)

Creusa, in order to hide the new born son from the eyes of the society, packed up the new born child in a casket and left that place. Here, the casket has the binary opposition with the cradle. Normally the cradle is the bed for the infant which rocks but is immobile. Here the infant kept in the casket had moved to the place along the river in the myth of Karna.

Karna and Casket

The birth of Karna is related to celestials. It is unbelievable. So Kunti, the mother of Karna, was afraid of her parents and so she wants to hide the child born to her (Ganguli 1896).

> And Kunti cast the handsome child into the water. But the child thus thrown into the water was taken up by the excellent husband of Radha and given by him to his wife to be adopted by her as their son.
> Section LXVII, Sambhava Parva, Book I, The Mahabharata
> And after the birth of this child, the illustrious Tapana granted unto Pritha her maidenhood and ascended to heaven. And the princess of the Vrishni race beholding with sorrow that son born of her, reflected intently upon what was then the best for her to do. And from fear of her relatives she resolved to conceal that evidence of her folly. And she cast her offspring endowed with great physical strength into the water. Then the well-known husband of Radha, of the Sutra caste, took up the child thus cast into the water, and he and his wife brought him up as their own son.
> Section CXI, Sambhava Parva, Adi Parva, Book 1, The Mahabharata

Thus, Kunti kept her newborn child safely in a casket and made it to float in the river. Thus myths of Ion and Karna have similarities called parallels in situations such as their father being God and the situation of birth and hiding the child in a casket. This resemblance seen in both of these myths is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. *Casket – Ion and Karna*

Casket and its Chattels

To protect the baby from its surroundings and as a mark of his forerunners of the origin, some specific materials were placed along with the baby in the casket. It is also seen in the myth of Ion.

Ion Casket and its Chattels

Due to the illegitimate birth, baby Ion was kept in a casket with some chattels.

Ἴων	Ion
κενὸν τόδ᾽ ἄγγος ἢ στέγει πλήρωμά τι;	(1412) Is this vessel empty, or does it cover
Κρέουσα	something?
σά γ᾽ ἔνδυθ᾽, οἷσί σ᾽ ἐξέθηκ᾽ ἐγώ ποτε.	Creusa
(Murray 1913)	(1413) Yes, your clothes, in which I then
	exposed you.
	(Potter 1938)

Thus clothes were kept in the casket along with the baby Ion. There were some other chattels kept along with the baby Ion.

Κρέουσα	Creusa
Γοργὼ μὲν ἐν μέσοισιν ἠτρίοις πέπλων.	(1421) A Gorgon in the middle threads of
(Murray 1913)	the robe. (Potter 1938)

Thus Gorgon was related with the cloth of Ion.

Κρέουσα

κεκρασπέδωται δ᾽ ὄφεσιν αἰγίδος τρόπον.
(Murray 1913)

Creusa

(1423) And, like an aegis, bordered with serpents. (Potter 1938)

As mentioned in the play, here a special type of garment called aegis bordered with the picture of serpents was found in the casket along with the baby.

Ἴων

ἔστιν τι πρὸς τῷδ᾽, ἢ μόνῳ τῷδ᾽ εὐτυχεῖς;
Κρέουσα
δράκοντες· ἀρχαῖόν τι παγχρύσῳ γένει
δώρημ᾽ Ἀθάνας, ἣ τέκν᾽ ἐντρέφειν λέγει —
Ἐριχθονίου γε τοῦ πάλαι μιμήματα.
Ἴων
(1430) τί δρᾶν, τί χρῆσθαι, φράζε μοι, χρυσώματι;
Κρέουσα
δέραια παιδὶ νεογόνῳ φέρειν, τέκνον.
(Murray 1913)

Ion

(1426) Is there anything else besides, or are you lucky in this only?
Creusa
Serpents; an old gift of Athena, in gold; she tells us to rear children, in imitation of Erichthonius of long ago.
Ion
(1430) Tells you to do what with the gold, how to use it? Explain it to me.
Creusa
(1431) Necklaces for the new-born baby to wear, my child.
(Potter 1938)

Along with the above mentioned things, necklaces were kept along with the baby Ion (Kovacs 1999).[7] In addition to this, some other things were also present near the baby Ion.

Ἴων

ἔνεισιν οἵδε· τὸ δὲ τρίτον ποθῶ μαθεῖν.
Κρέουσα
στέφανον ἐλαίας ἀμφέθηκά σοι τότε,
ἣν πρῶτ᾽ Ἀθάνα σκόπελον εἰσηνέγκατο,
(1435) ὅς, εἴπερ ἔστιν, οὔποτ᾽ ἐκλείπει χλόην,
θάλλει δ᾽, ἐλαίας ἐξ ἀκηράτου γεγώς.
(Murray 1913)

Ion

They are here; I long to know the third thing.
Creusa
I put an olive crown around you, from the tree that Athena first brought out of the rock; (1435) if it is there, it has not lost its green, but flourishes, born from an immortal olive tree.
(Potter 1938)

Further, an olive crown was kept along with the baby Ion. To sum up, the following things were found to be kept along with the baby:

1. A robe with a Gorgon
2. An aegis - bordered with serpents
3. Necklaces for the newborn baby

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[7]The golden necklace represents the snakes Athena put in Erichthonios' basket and such necklaces were still given to Athenian children as a token of their identity.

    4. Olive crown

These are shown in the Figure 4.

Figure 4. *Baby Ion with the Chattels*

Karna Casket and its Chattels

Due to the illegitimate birth, baby Karna was kept in a casket with some chattels (Ganguli 1896).

> And on coming to the river Ganga, she beheld a box drifting along the current. And containing articles capable of protecting from dangers and decked with unguents, that box was brought before her by the waves of the Janhavi……. And then he beheld a boy resembling the morning Sun. And the infant was furnished with golden mail, and looked exceedingly beautiful with a face decked in ear-rings.
> Section CCCVII, Vana Parva: Pativrata-mahatmya, Book 3, The Mahabharata
> ….that child who had come out with ear-rings and coat of mail. And he was gifted with the beauty of a celestial infant, and in splendour was like unto the maker of day himself. And every part of his body was symmetrical and well-adorned. And Kunti cast the handsome child into the water.
> Section LXVII, Sambhava Parva, Book I, The Mahabharata

Thus baby Karna was seen in the casket with earrings and coat of mail. Here it is noteworthy that these earrings and coat of mail were strongly attached to the body of the baby Karna. It was thought the baby Karna was born with these earrings and coat of mail. This coat of mail is equal to a breast plate or aegis as in the myth of Ion. It is shown in the Figure 5.

Figure 5. *Baby Karna in the Casket with Aegis*
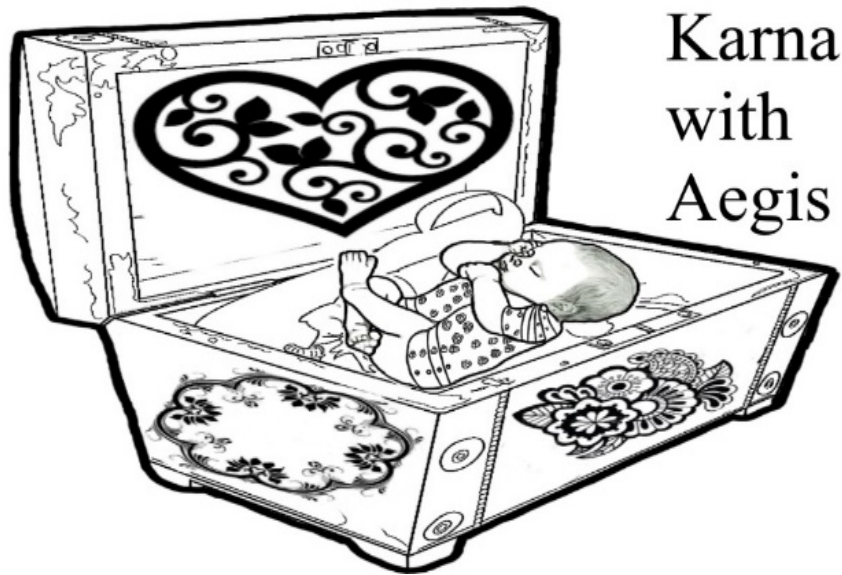
In the myth of Karna born with these earrings and coat of mail fixed in the body to protect the baby and if removed, would cause danger to his life. Thus the babies Ion and Karna were placed in the casket soon after their birth with some chattels. In the myth of Ion there is a necklace and in the myth of Karna there were earrings. In both of these myths a special type of breast plate was also included within. In the myth of Ion the breast plate was kept with the baby in the casket and in the myth of Karna the baby was born with earrings and the breast plate affixed to its body which is shown in the Figure 6.

Figure 6. *Breast Plate in the Myth of Ion and Karna*
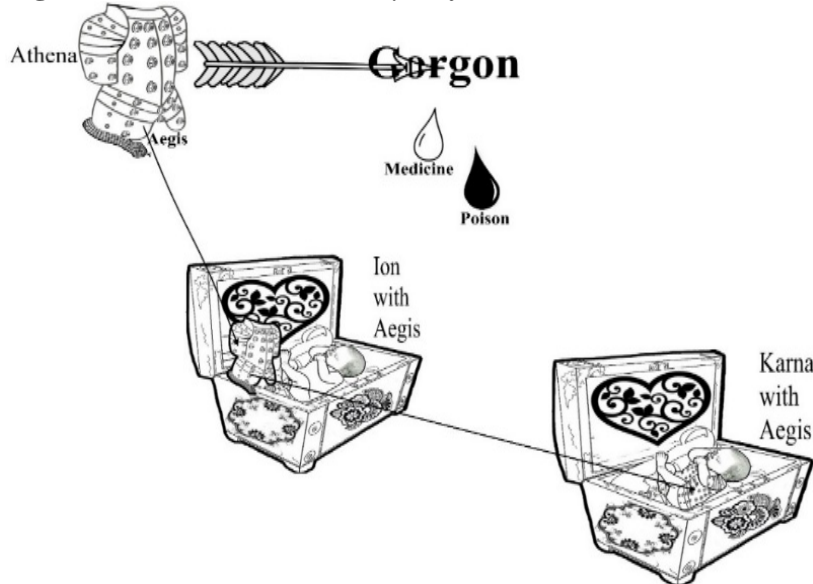
In the myth of Karna the garment is seen to save his life and if removed would cause danger to his life (Ganguli 1896).

And Indra desirous of benefiting his own son Phalguni (Arjuna), assuming the form of a Brahmana, approached Vasusena on one occasion and begged of him his natural armour. Thus asked Karna took off his natural armour, and joining his hands in reverence gave it unto [paragraph continues] Indra in the guise of a Brahmana. And the chief of the celestials accepted the gift and was exceedingly gratified with Karna's liberality.
Section CXI, Sambhava Parva, Adi Parva, Book 1, The Mahabharata

Thus here the breast plate relates with the binary opposition between life and death. So there is a need to see the aegis - breast plate in the myth of Ion.

Aegis

Aegis was kept with the baby Ion in the casket. There was a description about this aegis in this myth which follows.

Κρέουσα
(987) ἄκουε τοίνυν: οἶσθα γηγενῆ μάχην;
Πρεσβύτης
οἶδ᾽, ἣν Φλέγρᾳ Γίγαντες ἔστησαν θεοῖς.
Κρέουσα
ἐνταῦθα Γοργόν᾽ ἔτεκε Γῆ, δεινὸν τέρας.
Πρεσβύτης
(990) ἦ παισὶν αὐτῆς σύμμαχον, θεῶν πόνον;
Κρέουσα
ναί: καί νιν ἔκτειν᾽ ἡ Διὸς Παλλὰς θεά.
Πρεσβύτης
ποῖόν τι μορφῆς σχῆμ᾽ ἔχουσαν ἀγρίας;
Κρέουσα
θώρακ᾽ ἐχίδνης περιβόλοις ὡπλισμένον.
Πρεσβύτης
ἆρ᾽ οὗτός ἐσθ᾽ ὁ μῦθος ὃν κλύω πάλαι;
Κρέουσα
(995) ταύτης Ἀθάναν δέρος ἐπὶ στέρνοις ἔχειν.
Πρεσβύτης
ἣν αἰγίδ᾽ ὀνομάζουσι, Παλλάδος στολήν;
Κρέουσα
τόδ᾽ ἔσχεν ὄνομα θεῶν ὅτ᾽ ᾖξεν ἐς δόρυ.

(Murray 1913)

Creusa
(987) Listen, then; you know the battle of the giants?
Tutor
Yes, the battle the giants fought against the gods in Phlegra.
Creusa
There the earth brought forth the Gorgon, a dreadful monster.
Tutor
(990) As an ally for her children and trouble for the gods?
Creusa
Yes; and Pallas, the daughter of Zeus, killed it.
Tutor
What fierce shape did it have?
Creusa
A breastplate armed with coils of a viper.
Tutor
Is this the story which I have heard before?
Creusa
(995) That Athena wore the hide on her breast.
Tutor
And they call it the aegis, Pallas' armor?
Creusa
It has this name from when she darted to the gods' battle.

(Potter 1938)

Thus this aegis was defined as Pallas' armor – breast plate. Athena wore this breast plate when she fought with Gorgon. At that time the blood of Gorgon was obtained. The myth explains the extraordinary power of the blood drops.

Κρέουσα	Creusa
δισσοὺς σταλαγμοὺς αἵματος Γοργοῦς ἄπο.	Two drops of blood from the Gorgon.
Πρεσβύτης	Tutor
ἰσχὺν ἔχοντας τίνα πρὸς ἀνθρώπου φύσιν;	And what power do they have over mortals?
Κρέουσα	Creusa
(1005) τὸν μὲν θανάσιμον, τὸν δ᾽ ἀκεσφόρον νόσων.	(1005) One is deadly, the other heals disease.
(Murray 1913)	(Potter 1938)

Thus Gorgon blood was used to kill Ion. In this way the blood of Gorgon related with Pallas' armor – breast plate that was used to kill Ion. Among the two drops of blood collected from Gorgon, one drop of blood is deadly and another drop heals disease.

In the myth of Karna, the breast plate itself is related with the binary opposition of life and death. In this way, except for the Gorgon blood, the other incidents seem to be resembled in both the myths. This binary opposition seen between life and death is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. *Binary Opposition of Breast Plate*
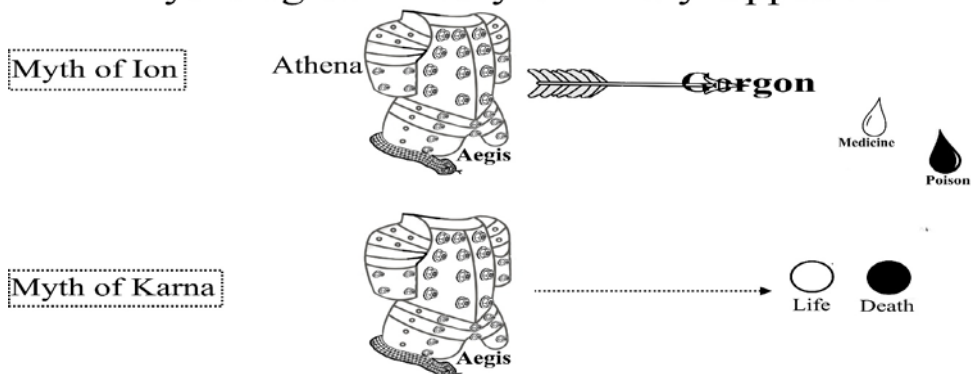
Here the blood of the Gorgon and the breast plate of Karna act as a Pharmakon.[8]

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[8]Pharmakon is a merging of opposite poles. This 'medicine' which acts as both remedy and poison. The pharmakon is ambivalent because it constitutes the medium in which opposites are opposed, linked and reversed, or make one side cross over the other.

Binary Opposition – Land and Sky

Land and sky are binary oppositions. These oppositions are seen in the myths of Ion and Karna.

Ion – Land and Sky

Ion is very efficient in archery, he has the unique skill of shooting a bird flying high in the sky.

ἔα ἔα·
φοιτῶσ᾽ ἤδη λείπουσίν τε
(155) πτανοὶ Παρνασοῦ κοίτας·
αὐδῶ μὴ χρίμπτειν θριγκοῖς
μηδ᾽ ἐς χρυσήρεις οἴκους —
μάρψω σ᾽ αὖ τόξοις, ὦ Ζηνὸς
κῆρυξ, ὀρνίθων γαμφηλαῖς
(160) ἰσχὺν νικῶν.
ὅδε πρὸς θυμέλας ἄλλος ἐρέσσει
κύκνος. οὐκ ἄλλα
φοινικοφαῆ πόδα κινήσεις;
οὐδέν σ᾽ ἁ φόρμιγξ ἁ Φοίβου
(165) σύμμολπος τόξων ῥύσαιτ᾽ ἄν.
πάραγε πτέρυγας·
λίμνας ἐπίβα τᾶς Δηλιάδος·
αἱμάξεις, εἰ μὴ πείσῃ,
τὰς καλλιφθόγγους ᾠδάς.
(170) ἔα ἔα·
τίς ὅδ᾽ ὀρνίθων καινὸς προσέβα;
μῶν ὑπὸ θριγκοὺς εὐναίας
καρφυρὰς θήσων τέκνοις;
ψαλμοί σ᾽ εἴρξουσιν τόξων.
οὐ πείσῃ; χωρῶν δίναις
(Murray 1913)

Ah, ah! Already the birds of Parnassus have left their nests, (155) and come here. I forbid you to approach the walls and the golden house. I will reach you with my bow, herald of Zeus, though you conquer (160) with your beak the strength of all other birds. Here comes another, a swan, to the rim of the temple. Move your crimson foot elsewhere! Phoebus' lyre, that sings with you, (165) would not protect you from my bow. Alter your wings' course; go to the Delian lake; if you do not obey, you will steep your lovely melody in blood. (170) Ah, ah! what is this new bird that approaches; you will not place under the cornice a straw-built nest for your children, will you? My singing bow will keep you off. Will you not obey?
(Potter 1938)

Thus Ion attacked the flying birds accurately from the land with his special skill in archery. Here, there are some more binary oppositions linked with this incident.

Binary Opposition of Hazarder and Savior

Hazarder and Saviour are binary opposites. The Hazarder face hazard and Saviour is saved. This is the binary opposition; the one which has been saved from the danger also tries to save the saviour. The one which has killed also caused the killer to be killed. Here this binary opposition becomes deconstructed. Ion tried to kill the birds. The same birds have saved Ion from death, yet they died by drinking the poison which was kept for Ion to die.

καὶ ταῖς μὲν ἄλλαις ἄνοσος ἦν λοιβὴ θεοῦ·
ἣ δ᾽ ἕζετ᾽ ἔνθ᾽ ὁ καινὸς ἔσπεισεν γόνος,
ποτοῦ τ᾽ ἐγεύσατ᾽, εὐθὺς εὔπτερον δέμας
ἔσεισε κἀβάκχευσεν, ἐκ δ᾽ ἔκλαγξ᾽ ὄπα
(1205) ἀξύνετον αἰάζουσ᾽· ἐθάμβησεν δὲ πᾶς
θοινατόρων ὅμιλος ὄρνιθος πόνους.
θνῄσκει δ᾽ ἀπασπαίρουσα, φοινικοσκελεῖς
χηλὰς παρεῖσα. γυμνὰ δ᾽ ἐκ πέπλων μέλη
ὑπὲρ τραπέζης ᾖχ᾽ ὁ μαντευτὸς γόνος,
(1210) βοᾷ δέ· Τίς μ᾽ ἔμελλεν ἀνθρώπων
κτενεῖν; σήμαινε, πρέσβυ·
(Murray 1913)

The god's offering drinks was harmless to the other doves; but the one who sat where the new son had poured out his libation and tasted the drink at once shook her body, with its lovely plumes, and whirled around, and cried out with (1205) an unintelligible sound. The whole crowd of guests was amazed at the bird's torment. She struggled and died, stretching out her scarlet legs. The son given by the prophet held his arms, bare from his robe, over the table, (1210) and shouted: "Who intended to kill me? Let us know, old man;
(Potter 1938)

Thus, the binary opposition of Hazarder and Saviour has been deconstructed in the myth of Ion.

Karna – Land and Sky

Karna is a great warrior who uses his bow and arrow. He can even shoot the arrow towards a moving object hanging in the sky by seeing the image of it being reflected in the water on the ground (Ganguli 1896).

Causing some machinery to be erected in the sky, the king set up a mark attached to that machinery. And Drupada said, 'He that will string this bow and with these well-adorned arrows shoot the mark above the machine shall obtain my daughter.'
Section CLXXXVII, Swayamvara Parva, Book I, The Mahabharata

"And (some amongst) those kings in exerting with swelling lips each according to his strength, education, skill, and energy,--to string that bow, were tossed on the ground and lay perfectly motionless for some time. Their strength spent and their crowns and garlands loosened from their persons, they began to pant for breath and their ambition of winning that fair maiden was cooled. Tossed by that tough bow, and their garlands and bracelets and other ornaments disordered, they began to utter exclamations of woe. And that assemblage of monarchs, their hope of obtaining Krishna gone, looked sad and woeful. And beholding the plight of those monarchs, Karna that foremost of all wielders of the bow went to where the bow was, and quickly raising it strung it and placed the arrows on the string. And beholding the son of Surya--Karna of the Suta tribe--like unto fire, or Soma, or Surya himself, resolved to shoot the mark, those foremost of bowmen--the sons of Pandu--regarded the mark as already shot and brought down upon the ground. But seeing Karna, Draupadi loudly said, 'I will not select a Suta for my lord.' Then Karna, laughing in vexation and casting glance at the Sun, threw aside the bow already drawn to a circle.
Section CLXXXIX, Swayamvara Parva, Book I, The Mahabharata

The above said structure of archery competition is shown in the Figure 8.

Figure 8. *Karna and His Archery Competition*

This skill of Karna made him a great warrior with special skills and talents in the myth. It shows that this myth belonged to the era of archery (Pugazhendhi 2021a).[9] Even though Karna was a master in archery, the brides refused to marry him due to his illegitimate and lowly birth. Thus both Ion and Karna have resemblances in the skill of arrow shooting. This has an important role in the myth of Karna, but it is considered as one of the incidents and not given much importance in the myth of Ion. The arrow shooting from the land to the object in the sky is a binary opposition between the land and sky—that which is seen in both of these myths.

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[9]There are numerous developments in the history of war weapons. Stones and bones were the first stage, metal swords were the second stage. The sword can attack the enemy nearby. The third stage in the development of the war weapon was the invention of the bow and arrow. It can attack even enemies far off. The development of war weapons such as archery is reflected in the myths of Herakles. This clearly shows that both the myths belonged to the era of archery. In both of the myths the archery competition determines the life partner. At this point of the myth there seems to be a main difference between them. Even though Herakles emerged victorious, Eurytus did not keep his word and refused to give his daughter to Herakles as a prize, whereas in the myth of Rama, the father of the bride gave his daughter as a prize for the winner of the archery competition.

Binary Opposition between Royal Character and Common Character

Royal birth culture and value system have been endowed by Logocentrism with a sense of superiority and entitlement. Logocentrism emphasizes the interpretation of the world based on one conception. Therefore, the men of royal birth are in possession of specific skills, which contain a power structure designated by the signifier and the signified. It strictly draws a line between the oppressor and the oppressed, the upper and the lower, as well as the ruler and the ruled. This binary opposition is maintained in both of these myths. To be skilled in archery is in the veins of royal character. The archery skill of Ion and Karna itself indicates that they belong to royal family. In other words, the members of the royal family can only be skilled in archery. Thus both the myths maintain the binary opposition of the king and the common people.

Binary Opposition – Rich and Poor

Rich and poor are binary oppositions. Happiness and good characters are related with richness. Sadness and crooked characters are related with poverty. These binary oppositions are questioned in the myth of Ion. In the play 'Ion', he is introduced as the son of God, who was homeless and very poor. Later, Ion becomes a king.

οὗ σ᾽ ὄλβιον μὲν σκῆπτρον ἀναμένει πατρός,
πολὺς δὲ πλοῦτος· οὐδὲ θάτερον νοσῶν
(580) δυοῖν κεκλήσῃ δυσγενὴς πένης θ᾽ ἅμα,
ἀλλ᾽ εὐγενής τε καὶ πολυκτήμων βίου.
(Murray 1913)

where his scepter awaits you, and abundant wealth; although you suffer from one of these two conditions, (580) you will not be called ill-born and poor, but well-born and rich.
(Potter 1938)

Thus the binary opposition between rich and poor is seen in the myth of Ion. When Ion was poor his life was peaceful, happy and his mind was calm. In the richness he has lost his peacefulness and calmness. This should be searched in the myth of Karna (Ganguli 1896).

one who is not a king, I will install Karna as king of Anga.'
Section CXXXVIII, Sambhava Parva, Book 1, The Mahabharata

Thus in the first part Karna lived a life as the son of charioteer and then was transformed into a king. In this way the binary opposition between rich and poor is seen in the myths of Ion and Karna. It is depicted in Figure 9. [10]

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[10]τυραννίδος δὲ τῆς μάτην αἰνουμένης
τὸ μὲν πρόσωπον ἡδύ, τἀν δόμοισι δὲ
λυπηρά: τίς γὰρ μακάριος, τίς εὐτυχής,
ὅστις δεδοικὼς καὶ παραβλέπων βίον
(625) αἰῶνα τείνει; δημότης ἂν εὐτυχὴς
ζῆν ἂν θέλοιμι μᾶλλον ἢ τύραννος ὤν,
ᾧ τοὺς πονηροὺς ἡδονὴ φίλους ἔχειν,
ἐσθλοὺς δὲ μισεῖ κατθανεῖν φοβούμενος.
εἴποις ἂν ὡς ὁ χρυσὸς ἐκνικᾷ τάδε,
(630) πλουτεῖν τε τερπνόν; οὐ φιλῶ ψόφους κλύειν
ἐν χερσὶ σῴζων ὄλβον οὐδ᾽ ἔχειν πόνους:
εἴη γ᾽ ἐμοὶ μὲν μέτρια μὴ λυπουμένῳ.
ἃ δ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽ εἶχον ἀγάθ᾽ ἄκουσόν μου, πάτερ:
τὴν φιλτάτην μὲν πρῶτον ἀνθρώπῳ σχολὴν
(635) ὄχλον τε μέτριον, οὐδέ μ᾽ ἐξέπληξ᾽ ὁδοῦ
πονηρὸς οὐδείς: κεῖνο δ᾽ οὐκ ἀνασχετόν,
εἴκειν ὁδοῦ χαλῶντα τοῖς κακίοσιν.
θεῶν δ᾽ ἐν εὐχαῖς † ἢ γόοισιν ἦ βροτῶν,
ὑπηρετῶν χαίρουσιν, οὐ γοωμένοις.
(640) καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἐξέπεμπον, οἳ δ᾽ ἦκον ξένοι,
ὥσθ᾽ ἡδὺς αἰεὶ καινὸς ἐν καινοῖσιν ἦ.
ὃ δ᾽ εὐκτὸν ἀνθρώποισι, κἂν ἄκουσιν ἦ,
δίκαιον εἶναί μ᾽ ὁ νόμος ἡ φύσις θ᾽ ἅμα
παρεῖχε τῷ θεῷ. ταῦτα συννοούμενος
(645) κρείσσω νομίζω τἀνθάδ᾽ ἢ τἀκεῖ, πάτερ.
ἔα δ᾽ ἔμ᾽ αὐτοῦ ζῆν: ἴση γὰρ ἡ χάρις,
μεγάλοισι χαίρειν σμικρὰ θ᾽ ἡδέως ἔχειν.
(Murray 1913)

The outward face of royalty, falsely praised, is sweet, but there is bitterness in the home; for who is happy or fortunate, who draws out his life in fear and sidelong glances? (625) I would rather live as a fortunate citizen than as a king, for whom it is a pleasure to have wicked friends and hate the virtuous thought fear of death. You might say that gold overcomes these things (630) and riches give delight? I do not like to hear the noise of the crowd, while I guard my wealth at hand, nor to have troubles; I would rather have moderation, free of care.

Listen to the blessings I have here, father; first, the dearest to mortals, leisure, and (635) moderate trouble; no worthless creature has struck me out of the way; this is not to be borne, to give way and yield to road to the base. In prayers to the gods or . . . of men, I would serve those who rejoiced, not those who lamented. (640) And some I would send away, while others would come as guests, so that I am always a pleasant novelty among the new arrivals. And—what men ought to wish for, even if they are unwilling—custom and my nature made me righteous before God. With these things in mind, (645) I think it better here than there, father. Let me live here; for the pleasure is equal, to rejoice in greatness or to have delight with little.
(Potter 1938)

Figure 9. *Binary Opposition – Rich and Poor*

Mythological Theory of Binary Opposition

Ion and Karna

Rich   Poor
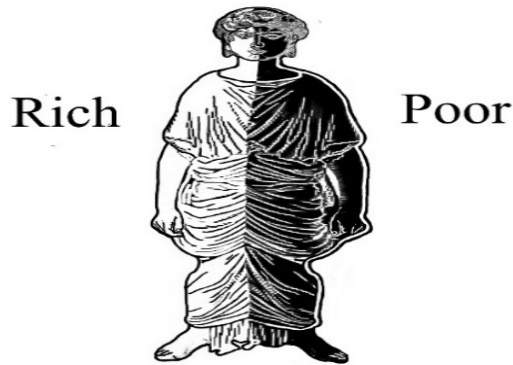
Thus Ion and Karna, both have similarities called parallels in both of the myths with the binary oppositions such as 1.) Noble birth versus low birth; 2.) Life versus death; 3.) Land versus sky; and 4.) Rich versus poor. Some of these are related to their birth. Birth is associated with mother. So there is a need to research about the characterization of mother in these myths.

Mother

The opposition between man and woman, father and mother are major concepts in binary oppositions. The thought of the society differs between the father and the mother of a illegitimate son. The illegitimate sexual affair of a man has not been viewed seriously, but it has opposite effect in the case of a woman. The play 'Ion' which revolves around the deconstruction of binary oppositions has raised some arguments on this world's bipolarity.

Mother in the Myth of Ion

Creusa is the mother of the main character in the play 'Ion'. There are many binary oppositions that are seen in the making of her character.

Binary Opposition – Human versus God

Creusa is a normal woman, but she has an illegitimate relationship with God. Thus a binary opposition, human versus god, is seen in the mother characterization of the Ion myth. This illegitimate connection leads to another binary opposition.

Binary Opposition – Legal, Hidden Bed

Marriage has an important role in fulfilling the purpose of a woman being a legitimate wife. Sometimes man and woman have illegitimate relationships without the knowledge of their parents and society. Mostly it is not welcomed by elders. The same has also happened in the life of Creusa and she was worried about her hidden bed which is not revealed to her parents.

Κρέουσα	Creusa
ὦ ψυχά, πῶς σιγάσω;	O my soul, how shall I be silent? (860) But
(860) πῶς δὲ σκοτίας ἀναφήνω	how shall I reveal the hidden bed, and depart
εὐνάς, αἰδοῦς δ᾽ ἀπολειφθῶ;	from shame?
(Murray 1913)	(Potter 1938)

Κρέουσα	Creusa
(868) σιγῶσα γάμους,	when I was silent on this union, silent on
σιγῶσα τόκους πολυκλαύτους;	the lamented birth.
(Murray 1913)	(Potter 1938)

Κρέουσα	Creusa
(874) οὐκέτι κρύψω λέχος,	I will no longer conceal this bed,
(Murray 1913)	(Potter 1938)

Κρέουσα	Creusa
(880) λέκτρων προδότας ἀχαρίστους.	(880) ungrateful betrayers of the beds they
(Murray 1913)	forced.
	(Potter 1938)

Thus, Creusa censured about her illicit relations. Here, there are many binary oppositions seen related with this illegitimate relation between man, woman and God. The illegal relation of Creusa, the woman has strongly been criticized by Ion, her son. At the same time, the illegitimate relation of the man was not so strongly criticized by him. Moreover, the illegal relation of the God Apollo (male) faces strong criticism. Thus, the binary opposition between the man and woman relationship has been maintained in the myth of Ion as that of the thought of male-dominated society of that period. At the same time, the illegal relation of a man and the illicit relation of a male God have not been considered as the same in the play. It has been expected that the character of a male God should be above the character of a man. Thus the binary opposition between God and human has been subjected to argumentation.

After the illegitimate bed of Creusa period of time has elapsed, enemies defeated her country and the victorious king married her.

Κρέουσα	Creusa
(298) φερνάς γε πολέμου καὶ δορὸς λαβὼν	Taking me as the dowry of war and the
γέρας.	prize of his spear.
(Murray 1913)	(Potter 1938)

Unlawful Marriage of Kunti

Kunti had an illegitimate connection before her legal marriage (Ganguli 1896).

Hearing this, Kunti said, 'O slayer of foes, a certain Brahamana gave me this formula of invocation as a boon, and, O lord, I have summoned thee only to test its efficacy. For this offence I bow to thee. A woman, whatever be her offence, always deserveth pardon.' Surya (Sun) replied, 'I know that Durvasa hath granted this boon. But cast off thy fears, timid maiden, and grant me thy embraces. Amiable one, my approach cannot be futile; it must bear fruit. Thou hast summoned me, and if it be for nothing, it shall certainly be regarded as thy transgression.'
Section CXI, Sambhava Parva, Adi Parva, Book 1, The Mahabharata

And the Rishi said, 'Those celestials that thou shall summon by this Mantra shall certainly approach thee and give thee children.' 'Thus addressed by the Brahmana, the amiable Kunti (Pritha) became curious, and in her maidenhood summoned the God Arka (Sun). And as soon as he pronounced the Mantra, she beheld that effulgent deity--that beholder of everything in the world--approaching her.
Section CXI, Sambhava Parva, Adi Parva, Book 1, The Mahabharata

Thus the binary opposition related with the legitimate and hidden bed is seen in the myth of Kunti. In this way both Creusa and Kunti have resemblances in this binary opposition, legitimate versus illegitimate. Here there is a raising of one more binary opposition. Creusa was forced to bed with the God and Kunti was blessed to unite with the God. That is, Karna was born by the boon of God and Ion was born by the misfortune of God. Thus there is a binary opposition of blessing and misfortune seen between these two myths. This binary opposition results from theism and atheism. The myth of Ion move towards atheism, but the myth of Karna wants to maintain theism even by hiding the mistakes of God.

Binary Opposition – Son and Sonless

Child and childlessness are the poles of binary opposition. In the same way, married and unmarried are the poles of another binary opposition. In these, unmarried is related to childlessness and married is related to child. On the contrary, if the unmarried is related with child and the married is related with childlessness, it leads to the deconstruction of binary opposition. It is also seen in the life of Creusa. Soon after the secret sexual relationship before the lawful marriage, Creusa gave birth to a son. But, after the legal marriage, she had no children born to her for a long time. This binary opposition operates in the play 'Ion'.

χρόνια δὲ σπείρας λέχη
(65) ἄτεκνός ἐστι, καὶ Κρέουσ᾽: ὧν οὕνεκα
ἥκουσι πρὸς μαντεῖ᾽ Ἀπόλλωνος τάδε
ἔρωτι παίδων. (Murray 1913)

Though married a long time (65) they are childless; so they have come to this oracular shrine of Phoebus, in longing for a child.
(Potter 1938)

Χορός
ὁρῶ δάκρυα καὶ πενθίμους
ἀλαλαγὰς στεναγμάτων τ᾽ ἐσβολάς,
ὅταν ἐμὰ τύραννος εὐπαιδίαν
πόσιν ἔχοντ᾽ εἰδῇ,
(680) αὐτὴ δ᾽ ἄπαις ᾖ καὶ λελειμμένη
τέκνων.
(Murray 1913)

Chorus
I see tears and mournful cries and
attacks of groaning when my queen
knows that her husband is blessed with
a child, (680) while she is childless and
deprived of children.
(Potter 1938)

This reference shows the childlessness of Creusa after her lawful marriage, but she had an illegitimate child before her lawful marriage.

Ἴων
ὦ φιλτάτη μοι μῆτερ, ἄσμενός σ᾽ ἰδὼν
πρὸς ἀσμένας πέπτωκα σὰς παρηίδας.
Κρέουσα
ὦ τέκνον, ὦ φῶς μητρὶ κρεῖσσον ἡλίου —
(1440) συγγνώσεται γὰρ ὁ θεός — ἐν
χεροῖν σ᾽ ἔχω,
ἄελπτον εὕρημ᾽, ὃν κατὰ γᾶς ἐνέρων
χθόνιον μετὰ Περσεφόνας τ᾽ ἐδόκουν
ναίειν.
(Murray 1913)

Ion
O my dearest mother! I see you with joy, I
am held to your joyful face.They embrace.
Creusa
O child, o light dearer to your mother than
the sun (1440) —the god will forgive me—I
hold you in my arms, unexpectedly found,
when I thought you lived in the world below,
with the dead and Persephone.
(Potter 1938)

Thus there is a binary opposition seen between giving birth earlier and not having any children for long time[11] related with illegitimate and legitimate marriage in the characterization of Creusa in the myth of Ion. This binary opposition also leads to many binary oppositions. Some of the binary oppositions are - doubt and certainty, true and false and Greeks and foreigners (Pure breed Vs. Hybridity).

Ion is not the son of Xuthus, but it is thought that he is the son of Xuthus. Ion is the son of Creusa, but it is thought that he is not the son of Creusa. Thus the binary oppositions of doubt and certainty, true and false are deconstructed in this myth. The other binary opposition is Greeks and foreigners (Pure breed Vs. Hybridity) (Homi 1994, Bates 1975).[12]

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[11] After that she had offspring by the grace of God.

Ξούθῳ δὲ καὶ σοὶ γίγνεται κοινὸν γένος,
(1590) Δῶρος μέν, ἔνθεν Δωρὶς ὑμνηθήσεται…
(Murray 1913)

You and Xuthus will have children together:
(1590) Dorus, from whom the Dorian state
will be celebrated ….
(Potter 1938)

[12]Hybridity is "the sign of the productivity of colonial power", so it is generated by colonialism and in the same time, it is used by colonial powers nowadays to ensure the continuation of their colonialism. This is due to the fact that hybridity is the existence of transcultural groups from different nations, colors, and classes who happen to live at the same place as a result of the colonial period and its impacts. Hybridity refers to culture, related to the three interconnected realms of race, language, and ethnicity. Hybridity achieves hegemony throughout its transcultural forms.

Creusa is the daughter of Erechtheus who was the king of Athens and Xuthus, an Achaean of Aeolid race, who married Creusa forcibly but is still a Greek woman. Creusa begot Ion. Ion became the king of Athens. Xuthus thought that Ion was his son. Creusa only knew the Greek blood of Ion. Here the paternal side of the blood of Ion became suspiciously related with the purity of Greek blood.[13] Blood of the God is more superior to the blood of any race. Thus by saying the father of Ion is Apollo, the binary opposition of Greeks and alien (Pure breed Vs. Hybrid) should be maintained.[14]

Kunti - Son and Sonless

Kunti had a son immediately with the Sun God before her illegitimate marriage. After the legal marriage she remained childless with her legal husband. After a long time she prayed the Gods and got children. Here it is noted that these children are not born with her legal husband. The reality behind the blessing of God has been mentioned in the epic.[15] Thus the characterization of the myth of Kunti has binary opposition related with having children and not having children related with illegitimate and legitimate marriage. In this way both Creusa of Ion myth and Kunti of Karna myth have binary opposition related with giving birth and not giving birth and that is shown in the Figure 10.

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[13] Ἴων

εἶναί φασι τὰς αὐτόχθονας
(590) κλεινὰς Ἀθήνας οὐκ ἐπείσακτον γένος,
ἵν᾽ ἐσπεσοῦμαι δύο νόσω κεκτημένος,
πατρός τ᾽ ἐπακτοῦ καὐτὸς ὢν νοθαγενής.
(Murray 1913)

Ion

It is said that the famous Athenians are natives of the land, (590) not a foreign race, so that I shall burst in on them with two ailments, my father a foreigner, and myself of bastard birth.
(Potter 1938)

[14] λαβοῦσα τόνδε παῖδα Κεκροπίαν χθόνα
χώρει, Κρέουσα, κἀς θρόνους τυραννικοὺς
(1573) ἵδρυσον. ἐκ γὰρ τῶν Ἐρεχθέως γεγὼς
δίκαιος ἄρχειν τῆς γ᾽ ἐμῆς ὅδε χθονός,
ἔσται τ᾽ ἀν᾽ Ἑλλάδ᾽ εὐκλεής.
(Murray 1913)

Creusa, take your son and go to the land of Cecrops; set him on the royal throne. For he was born from Erechtheus and is fit to rule my land. (1575) and he will be famous throughout Hellas.
(Potter 1938)

[15] The celebrated Pandu, tempted by the desire of having more children, wished to speak again unto his wedded wife (for invoking some other god). But Kunti addressed him, saying, 'The wise do not sanction a fourth delivery even in a season of distress. The woman having intercourse with four different men is called a Swairini (heanton), while she having intercourse with five becometh a harlot. Therefore, O learned one, as thou art well-acquainted with the scripture on this subject, why dost thou, beguiled by desire of offspring, tell me so in seeming forgetfulness of the ordinance?
- Section CXXIV, Sambhava Parva, Book 1, The Mahabharata (Ganguli 1896).

Figure 10. *Delivery versus Non Delivery*

Thus, the binary opposition of (married, child) and (unmarried, childless) becomes deconstructed in both of these myths. The other binary opposition of pure breed and hybridity need to be searched here. Kunti is the daughter of a king. She begot Karna. Karna was well versed in archery. In that time, it was thought that the skill of archery was only possible for the person who belonged to the family of a king. Here the blood from the paternal side of Karna is suspicious. So to maintain the binary opposition of the king and the common people, the father of Karna is related with God. Thus both the myths strongly maintain the binary opposition between the kings family and the common people.

Binary Opposition - Leave and Reclaim of the Child

Creusa had an illegitimate son before her legitimate marriage. Afraid of her parents, she abandoned her child.

Κρέουσα	Creusa
τὸν παῖδ᾽ ὃν ἔτεκεν ἐξέθηκε δωμάτων.	She exposed out of doors the child that she
Ἴων	bore.
(345) ὁ δ᾽ ἐκτεθεὶς παῖς ποῦ 'στιν; εἰσορᾷ φάος;	Ion
	(345) Where is the exposed child? Is it
Κρέουσα	alive?
οὐκ οἶδεν οὐδείς. ταῦτα καὶ μαντεύομαι.	Creusa
Ἴων	No one knows.This is what I am asking the
εἰ δ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ἔστι, τίνι τρόπῳ διεφθάρη;	oracle.
Κρέουσα	Ion
θῆράς σφε τὸν δύστηνον ἐλπίζει κτανεῖν.	If it is no longer alive, how was it
Ἴων	destroyed?

ποίῳ τόδ᾽ ἔγνω χρωμένη τεκμηρίῳ;
Κρέουσα
(350) ἐλθοῦσ᾽ ἵν᾽ αὐτὸν ἐξέθηκ᾽ οὐχ ηὗρ᾽ ἔτι.
Ἴων
ἦν δὲ σταλαγμὸς ἐν στίβῳ τις αἵματος;
Κρέουσα
οὔ φησι. καίτοι πόλλ᾽ ἐπεστράφη πέδον.
(Murray 1913)

Creusa
She expects that wild animals killed the unfortunate one.
Ion
By what sign did she know this?
Creusa
(350) When she came to the place where she had exposed him, she could no longer find him.
Ion
Was there a drop of blood in the path?
Creusa
She says not. Although she went back and forth over much ground.
(Potter 1938)

κυρεῖ δ᾽ ἅμ᾽ ἱππεύοντος ἡλίου κύκλῳ
προφῆτις ἐσβαίνουσα μαντεῖον θεοῦ:
ὄψιν δὲ προσβαλοῦσα παιδὶ νηπίῳ
ἐθαύμασ᾽ εἴ τις Δελφίδων τλαίη κόρη
45 λαθραῖον ὠδῖν᾽ ἐς θεοῦ ῥῖψαι δόμον,
ὑπέρ τε θυμέλας διορίσαι πρόθυμος ἦν:
οἴκτῳ δ᾽ ἀφῆκεν ὠμότητα — καὶ θεὸς
συνεργὸς ἦν τῷ παιδὶ μὴ 'κπεσεῖν δόμων
—
τρέφει δέ νιν λαβοῦσα. τὸν σπείραντα δὲ
(Murray 1913)

It happened that, as the sun rose, the priestess entered the god's prophetic shrine; she saw the baby and marvelled that some girl of Delphi had dared [45] **to cast her secret child into the house of the god;** she was eager to take it away from the shrine; but she let the harsh intent gave way to pity—and the god worked with her, so the child might not be hurled out of his house—she took up the child and raised it. (Potter Robert 1938)

At the end of the play Creusa reclaimed her child.

Κρέουσα
παρθένια δ᾽ ἐμᾶς λάθρα ματέρος
(1490) σπάργαν᾽ ἀμφίβολά σοι τάδ᾽ ἐνῆψα,
κερ-
κίδος ἐμᾶς πλάνους.
γάλακτι δ᾽ οὐκ ἐπέσχον, οὐδὲ μαστῷ
τροφεῖα ματρὸς οὐδὲ λουτρὰ χειροῖν,
ἀνὰ δ᾽ ἄντρον ἔρημον οἰωνῶν
(1495) γαμφηλαῖς φόνευμα θοίναμά τ᾽ εἰς
Ἄιδαν ἐκβάλλῃ.
Ἴων
ὦ δεινὰ τλᾶσα μῆτερ.
Κρέουσα
ἐν φόβῳ, τέκνον,
καταδεθεῖσα σὰν
ἀπέβαλον ψυχάν:
(1500) ἔκτεινά σ᾽ ἄκουσ᾽.
Ἴων
ἐξ ἐμοῦ τ᾽ οὐχ ὅσι᾽ ἔθνησκες.
Κρέουσα

Creusa
(1490) I fitted around you these baby-clothes, the work of my flying shuttle, done when I was a girl, in secret from my mother. I did not offer you milk, nor a mother's nourishment from the breast, nor did I wash you; you were cast out on the deserted cave, (1495) a victim of the beaks of birds, and a feast for Hades.
Ion
Mother, you dared to do terrible things.
Creusa
Bound by fear, my son, I cast your life away; (1500) unwillingly I killed you.
Ion
And I was about to kill you!
Creusa
Ah! dreadful was my fortune then, dreadful these things also; I am whirled here (1505) and there to misery, and back again to joy;

ἰώ: δειναὶ μὲν τότε τύχαι,
δεινὰ δὲ καὶ τάδ᾽: ἑλισσόμεσθ᾽ ἐκεῖθεν
(1505) ἐνθάδε δυστυχίαισιν εὐτυχίαις τε
πάλιν,
μεθίσταται δὲ πνεύματα.
μενέτω: τὰ πάροιθεν ἅλις κακά: νῦν δὲ
γένοιτό τις οὖρος ἐκ κακῶν, ὦ παῖ.
(Murray 1913)

but the wind is changing. Let it remain; the past evils are enough; now let there be a favoring breeze, after troubles, my son.
(Potter 1938)

Thus the binary opposition of abandoning the child and reclaiming the child later is seen in the characterization of Creusa in the myth of Ion. It should be searched in the myth of Karna. Karna's mother Kunti left her baby in the river. That baby was brought up by a charioteer. When the baby became an adult Kunti reclaimed him.

> Kunti said, 'Thou art Kunti's son, and not Radha's. Nor is Adhiratha thy father. Thou, O Karna, art not born in the Suta order. Believe what I say. Thou wert brought forth by me while a maiden. I held thee first in my womb. O son, thou wert born in the palace of Kuntiraja. O Karna, that divine Surya who blazeth forth in light and maketh everything visible, O foremost of all wielders of weapons, beget thee upon me. O irresistible one, thou, O son, wert brought forth by me in my father's abode, decked with (natural) ear-rings and accounted in a (natural) coat of mail, and blazing forth in beauty.
> Section CXLV, Udyoga Parva, Book 5, The Mahabharata

Thus, in both the myths of Ion and Karna regarding their mothers, Creusa and Kunti, have the binary opposition of leaving and reclaiming their child. This is pictured in Figure 11.

Figure 11. *Leave X Reclaim*

Mythological Theory of Binary Opposition
Mother of Ion and Karna

Leave the Child   Reclaim the Child

Binary Opposition of Biological Mother and Step Mother

Biological mother and step mother are the two poles of binary opposition. Biological mother loves the baby but the step mother hates the baby.[16] Here, the illegitimate baby might create an instability in the affection of its own mother. It is seen in both the myths - Ion and Karna. In the myth of Karna, the step mother has cherished the baby lovingly. It can be said that the childlessness of the step mother might be the reason for her love towards the baby. To note with regret it has not happened in the myth of Ion. Creusa erroneously thought that she was childless. But she tried to kill the step son. It is because the wealth and the rule of the kingdom were also linked with this affair. It affects the love of the step mother, even though she was childless. Thus these two myths have deconstructed the binary opposition of real mother and step mother.

Thus the mothers in both these myths have parallels in the binary oppositions - 1.) Human versus God relationship; 2.) Lawful versus Hidden Bed; 3.) Giving birth versus not giving birth; 4.) Abandoning versus Reclaiming the child.

In this way the resemblances seen between these two myths can be seen as in Table 1.

Table 1. *Comparison*

S. No.	Ion		Karna
1.	Highborn - Son of Apollo		Highborn
2.	Son of Apollo, the Sun		Son of Sun
3.	Mother kept the newly born baby in the casket and leave		Mother kept the newly born baby in the casket and leave it in the river
4.	Athenas breast plate along with the baby's casket		Baby with the breast plate in the casket
5.	Life and death depends upon the breast plate		Life and death depends upon the breast plate
6.	Knowledge of archery		Named for his extraordinary skill in archery.
7.	Grown as poor and at the end attain kingship		Grown as poor and at the end attain kingship

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[16] Κρέουσα
(1025) ὀρθῶς: φθονεῖν γάρ φασι μητρυιὰς τέκνοις.
(Murray 1913)
Προφῆτις
(1329) προγονοῖς δάμαρτες δυσμενεῖς ἀεί ποτε.
Ἴων
(1330) ἡμεῖς δὲ μητρυιαῖς γε πάσχοντες κακῶς.
(Murray 1913)

Creusa
(1025) Rightly; a stepmother is said to hate her stepchildren.
(Potter 1938)
Priestess
(1329) Wives are always hostile to former offspring.
Ion
(1330) But we suffer greatly from stepmothers.
(Potter 1938)

Mothers

S. No.	Creusa		Kunti
1.	Illegitimate connection with Apollo, the God		Illegitimate connection with Sun, the God
2.	Immediate birth of child in illegitimate marriage		Immediate birth of child in illegitimate marriage
3.	Childless with the legitimate husband for a long time		Childless with the legitimate husband for a long time
4.	Kept the illegitimate baby in the casket and leave		Kept the illegitimate baby in the casket and leave it in the river
5.	Recovered the baby in a grown up age		Recovered the baby in a grown up age

The resemblances seen between the two myths can be categorized as parallels and influences. If the resemblances are occasional and there is no contact between these two then it can be called parallels. If there is any connection in the occurrences between these two then it is called influence. Here there is a need to search the influential factors in these myths.

Mythological Theory of Influence

The Greek play 'Ion' mentioned about the possibilities of influence. The myth of Ion is not only related with Greek, but also with Asia.

Προφῆτις
(1355) λαβὼν νυν αὐτὰ τὴν τεκοῦσαν ἐκπόνει.
Ἴων
πᾶσάν γ᾽ ἐπελθὼν Ἀσιάδ᾽ Εὐρώπης θ᾽ ὅρους.
(Murray 1913)

Priestess
(1355) Now take them and find your mother.
Ion
I will go over all Asia and the boundaries of Europe.
(Potter 1938)

This reference highlights the relationship of Asia in this myth along with Europe. Apart from these few, some of the races also had influences in this myth.

Ξούθῳ δὲ καὶ σοὶ γίγνεται κοινὸν γένος,
(1590) Δῶρος μέν, ἔνθεν Δωρὶς ὑμνηθήσεται
πόλις κατ᾽ αἶαν Πελοπίαν: ὁ δεύτερος
Ἀχαιός, ὃς γῆς παραλίας Ῥίου πέλας
τύραννος ἔσται, κἀπισημανθήσεται
κείνου κεκλῆσθαι λαὸς ὄνομ᾽ ἐπώνυμος.
(Murray 1913)

You and Xuthus will have children together:
(1590) Dorus, from whom the Dorian state will be celebrated throughout the land of Pelops. The second son, Achaeus, will be king of the shore land near Rhion; and people called after him will be marked out as having his name. (Potter 1938)

These references ensure the influences of certain races like Geleon, Hopletes, Argades, Aegicores, Ionians, Dorians and Achaeus in this myth. Apart from this, the influence of the myth of Karna also needs to be studied. For this, the knowledge about the trade relationship between Greeks and Tamilians is to be known.

The Trade between Greeks and Tamilians

Trade took place between Greeks and Tamilians from the ancient times (Pugazhendhi 2020b, 2020c, 2022, 2021c). This trade leads to exchange of literary forms (Pugazhendhi 2020a), literary themes (Pugazhendhi 2022, 2021d), literary myths (Pugazhendhi 2021a, 2021b, 2021d) and so on.

Greek ships travelled to the Πανδίονος - Pandion or Pandyan kingdom who fought with Karna and the Κηπροβότρου - Chēramān kingdom who gave food to the soldiers of this Mahabharata mythical war.

Βασιλείας δ ἐστὶν ἡ μὲν Τύνδις Κηπροβότρου, κώμη παραθαλάσσιος ἔνσημος· ἡ δὲ Μουζιρὶς βασιλείας μὲν τῆς αὐτῆς, ἀκμάζουσα δὲ τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀριακῆς εἰς αὐτὴν ἐρχομένοις πλοίοις καὶ τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς· κεῖται δὲ παρὰ ποταμὸν, ἀπέχουσα ἀπὸ μὲν Τύνδεως διὰ τοῦ ποταμοῦ καὶ διὰ θαλάσσης σταδίους πεντακοσίους, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ κατ᾿ αὐτὴν εἴκοσι.Ἡ δὲ Νέλκυνδα σταδίους μὲν ἀπὸ Μουζιρέως ἀπέχει σχεδὸν πεντακοσίους, ὁμοίως διά τε ποταμοῦ (καὶ πεζῇ) καὶ διὰ θαλάσσης, **βασιλείας** δέ ἐστιν ἑτέρας, τῆς **Πανδίονος**· κεῖται δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ παρὰ ποταμὸν, ὡσεὶ ἀπὸ σταδίων ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι τῆς θαλάσσης.
— παράγραφοι 53-54,
Περίπλους της Ερυθράς Θαλάσσης

Tyndis is of the Kingdom of Cerobothra; it is a village in plain sight by the sea. Muziris, of the same Kingdom, abounds in ships sent there with **cargoes from Arabia, and by the Greeks;** it is located on a river, distant from Tyndis by river and sea five hundred stadia, and up the river from the shore twenty stadia. Nelcynda is distant from Muziris by river and sea about five hundred stadia, and is of another **Kingdom, the Pandion**. This place also is situated on a river, about one hundred and twenty stadia from the sea.
Periplus of the Eritheranian Sea (Wilfred 1912)

These descriptions are mapped in Figure 12.

Figure 12. *Tamil Nadu as Mentioned in Greek Text*
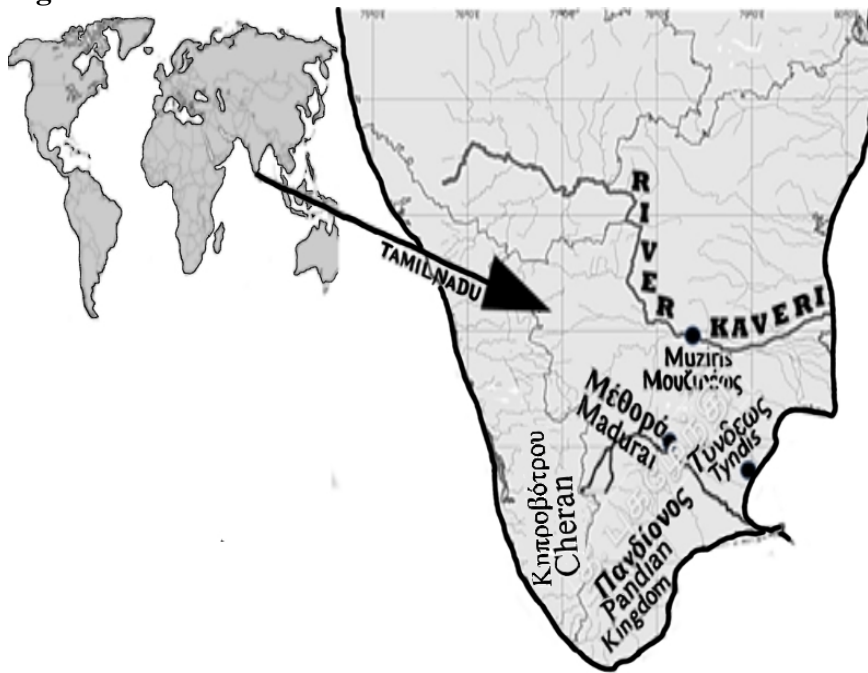
It ensures the ancient contact of Greeks with Tamilians. It may also be noted that the ancient Greeks knew about the 'Κηπροβότρου - Cerobothra' and 'Πανδίονος – Pandion' who were directly related with the myth of Karna. So through this sea trade the myth Ion and Karna might have transformed between Greek and Tamil lands. This shows that the resemblances between these two myths are not occasional or parallel, but influential according to the mythological theory of influences.

Conclusion

Ion has been mentioned in the Greek literature and Karna has been mentioned in the Tamil and Sanskrit literatures. There are some parallels seen between the myths of Ion and Karna. Many binary oppositions are evident in both of these myths. Both Ion and Karna are the sons of the Sun God. Both of them were kept in caskets and sent as orphans and they had a life like orphans. After a long time, they wanted to know about their mother. At the end, both of them attained their kingdoms. The binary opposition between orphan and high born; orphanage and the kingship; poverty and richness; love and curse are seen in both of these myths. Some of these binary oppositions have not occurred within two poles, but with one pole. It shows that these binary oppositions are not constants but variables. That is, these sets of binary oppositions are unstable. At the same time, both of the myths maintain some binary oppositions. The ruling power of the man and the high born character of the ruling man were insisted in both these myths. There are some deconstructions of binary oppositions also seen in both of these myths. The myth of Ion makes an attempt to give a detailed analysis from the perspective of

deconstruction by deconstructing the binary opposition between the holiness and the evil and God and man and the multiple identities of the religious faith, so as to explain that this set of binary opposition is unstable and at the same time, to enlighten the Agnosticism and call on them to find their unique identity, rethink themselves and dare to challenge the religious centralism and achieve self-value. In the myth of Karna, the holiness and the religious faith and the binary opposition of God and man are maintained. Regarding the binary opposition between holiness and unholiness of the sacred places, as in the myth of Ion, the author directly deconstructs the binary opposition. Regarding the binary opposition between man and woman, the author presents the scene towards the deconstruction of the binary opposition and makes the mind of the reader deconstruct it. The references show the ancient maritime trade between Greek and Tamil influences between these two myths with one another.

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