

Kate Tempest's Brand New Ancients: Myths Ancients And Contemporary

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Abstract

The intricate interplay between ancient mythologies and contemporary society, exploring how age-old narratives continue to shape and inform the cultural landscape of the modern world, the study unravels the threads that connect the mythic past with the present. The investigation begins by examining the persistence and adaptation of ancient myths in contemporary literature, analyzing how Tempest reinterprets and reinvents classical tales to address contemporary themes and concerns. Through a comprehensive review of the work, the study identifies how mythic motifs are repurposed to reflect the zeitgeist of the 21st century. The paper scrutinizes the influence of ancient myths on societal norms, values, and collective identity. Brand New Ancients not only illuminates how ancient myths persist in the contemporary world but also underscores their dynamic and evolving nature.

Keywords: *Myths, contemporary myths, epic poetry, postmodern British poetry*

Introduction

How do we look at myths and for how long have these myths been mastering the human world? Why do these myths have the ache of fury, fights, murders, killings, love, compassion, supernatural aid, and wrath of gods? Are gods among us, or are we so preoccupied that we don't understand them and ignore their every move? Decades, centuries, BCs, and ADs have embedded the oldest histories of myths in which monsters lurk in the darkness, gods raging armies of angels, monsters hunting down the forests, bloodthirsty beasts feeding on the demigods, heroes planning journeys¹ to repay their lost brides on other heroes, gods heroic and pathetic, and shadows demonic dying to eat the light bit by bit. These myths, I believe, are the epitome of man's quest for knowledge and learning. Ancients bestowed these legendary sagas to us, and these immortal epics have been passed from one generation to the next generation. But should we treat these myths as mere fantasies for entertainment in the then times or do these myths have to do something very serious all along and postulate an undying message to us? We are blessed by our ancients who laid down before us what humanity always needed.

Every culture existing in the world has myths to tell and inspire the populous, and one of the oldest histories of ancient mythology goes back to ancient Greek civilization where Greek masters like Horace, Virgil, and Euripides drew these godly figures in their works. Ancient Greek masters chose mythology over philosophy for grand narration because later one could not be understood by common men. Greek masters chose "Mythos" instead of "Logos" because myths helped in carrying out "the sense of the world" through stories while "logos" were based on the logical reasoning to find "the sense of the world" (Pattanaik xi). Both branches of knowledge present the same purpose which is the purpose of teaching, but myths were easily

understood by even common people while philosophy dealt with the more intellectual side. In the contemporary period, there is an inherent hurry and haphazardness that we are unable to relate to these myths [1,2,3,4,6,8].

We are so much broken up with the mythical world that we cannot even establish a common understanding of these myths commenting on this issue Tempest writes, “ But the plight of a people who have forgotten their myths”(Tempest 73).

Blending of myths and contemporary themes

Brand New Ancients is remarkably a great piece of art that re-establishes the broken bridge between the ancient and the contemporary mythic world. Tempest deliberately exhibits the subject of ancient myths which once again are being born in us, in contemporary people. With the help of ancient Greek myths, Tempest portrays many characters in her epic poem in similitude to Greek mythological characters. Every character of the poem has a close similarity with the ancient mythic world. Tempest sees all men and women as gods in themselves because our doings are very similar to the activities of ancient mythical gods. We inherently carry those mythical gods within us and frequently reveal their characteristics by sometimes doing great for the sake of the greater good, and sometimes when our actions are so vague and destructive, we stand utterly abominable. The poem Brand New Ancients emphasizes the part of selfishness of the mortal world and shows us the ways in which we are the beings still mythical. The dramatic story of the poem is based upon two neighbouring families who don't know each other but eventually, two of the individuals of both families get into an affair that turns out into the birth of an illegitimate son Thomas. It is the story of two blood-bound brothers Thomas and Clive, unknown to the fact that they are the same blood but one is born out of the unsuccessful institution of marriage and another by an affair. One wants to embrace humanity, and other feels dejected from the world. One is ambitious, and another is big trouble but all Tempest wants to portray is the role of Western parenting and the very idea of selfishness inherent in human nature which does not leave Gods to remain sacrosanct. It is the story of Jane and Kevin and Mary and Brian. It is the mouthpiece of everyday men. Tempest coloured her poem's characters in the similitude of ancient Greek characters, and some are very creatively labelled with original names such as Minotaur, Medea, Pandora, and Dionysus etcetera.

The poetic narrative

The poem presents a variety of characters and their resemblance to mythology characters. Ancient putative texts of mythology too had a variety of characters but those characters of gods, and heroes were aided either by gods or by the God of gods. Tempest's poetic tale is not about supernatural aid or “Deus ex machina” (Aristotle) but an epic with contemporary heroes who are everyday men. Tempest in the poem does not seem to copy the assets of a traditional hero but focuses on the deconstruction of the traditional hero. She reshapes the definition of a hero who does not beg for the ultimate intervention of supernatural entities but one who struggles in everyday life to acquire what he desires. In Tempest's poem hero is not made for the glorious wars but to find peace and solace in everyday life. Every single character of the poem signifies the characteristic either of a hero or of some hideous monster of mythical lore. The situation between Kevin and Jane establishes a failed notion of the marital institution and puts their character in a queue with the famous story of a failed marriage between Hephaestus and Aphrodite. Infidelity has been a very common and the most frequently occurring issue in ancient Greek stories and it was not committed only by males but women as well [1,2,3].

Mythical story of Hephaestus and Aphrodite

Hephaestus being the Smith-god, son of Hera descended from Olympus and a loyal husband who loved his wife and hoped for Aphrodite's love for him but contrary to his expectation, Aphrodite keeps the fact of Hephaestus's ugliness and him as brute since Aphrodite was the goddess of eternal beauty and refinement involved in an extra-marital affair with the God of war Ares and gave birth to three children (Pattanaik 28, 29). The married life between Kevin and Jane seems much like the failed marriage of Hephaestus and Aphrodite. Kevin like Hephaestus remains unacquainted with the fact of his wife's unfaithfulness while Jane like Aphrodite keeps cheating on Kevin, the unaware Hephaestus. Unlike the original story of Hephaestus and Aphrodite, Kevin never reaches the truth of his wife's betrayal while Hephaestus was revealed to the fact of Aphrodite's infidelity by the Sun-god Helios. Parallel to the story of Hephaestus and Aphrodite, Kevin as now new Hephaestus throws his gaze to Thomas, his son, who now walks like Brian and "got no dimple in his chin" (51), invoking Kevin to the suspicion of Jane's chastity. When Kevin comes to realize that Jane is no longer the person whom he loved and cared for, and she has been cheating on him, Kevin's situation seems quite the same as Hephaestus's situation when he realizes Aphrodite's infidelity. Tempest also calls Jane "Brand New Pandora" (297). The word Pandora refers to unwanted problems and miseries. Tempest's use of the name Pandora to Jane as a metaphor signals to the person a new problem because there were already tensions between Kevin and Jane, and now Jane's infidelity turns out as a bigger problem making her a "Brand New Pandora." Hesiod a great Greek poet and contemporary of Homer for the first time mentions the story of Pandora in his work *The Theogony* which means the birth of the gods. In *Brand New Ancients*, by the portrayal of Jane (a woman) as "Brand new Pandora," Tempest may question us about particularly patriarchal norms which for a long time in Greek and Biblical references has been considering woman accountable for the fall of humanity (Pattanaik 48). When Tempest mentions Odysseys, for sure, she is referring to the struggles of everyday men and women. *Brand New Ancients* can be called modern-day epic that pearls mythic metaphors from the ancient world [2,3,12].

Urban realism and poetic imagery

In the title of the poem, the word "Ancients" delineates "mythos" told by Greek bards, and those "mythos" center every activity, struggle, desire, and aspiration. When Tempest adds "Brand New" before the ancients, she means a lot of godliness to us. Myths and memories are not part of one age or one period rather, they are continuously emerging and occurring before us in some or other ways. The characters of Brian and Mary, for a few instances, match with the mythological Greek figures Laertes and Anticlea (Graves 216, 217) who were parents of Odysseus and Ctimene, and there is some parallelism with the Greek supreme God Zeus and Hera (Graves 53, 54). Analyzing the characters of Brian and Mary in reference to Laertes and Anticlea, there are a few similar incidents in the lives of Brian and Mary. Brian just like Laertes lives as the "prodigal father" (56) of Thomas who beautifully embraces the character of Odysseus. Some accounts of mythology depict that it was Sisyphus who seduced Anticlea and she bore Odysseus (Graves 217). Brian playing Laertes remains far away from his own blood Tommy AKA Thomas albeit admitting the fact, that Thomas is his own blood. On the other hand, Mary playing Anticlea lives in distressful life. The incident of adultery by which Thomas was begotten as an illegitimate son of Brian, and the entire responsibility goes on the shoulders of Brian in the poem, though in the original story of Laertes and Anticlea, Laertes does not commit an extra-marital affair but his wife Anticlea does with Sisyphus which resulted into the birth of Odysseus as an illicit son [13,14,16,18]. We may discourse on the story of Laertes and Anticlea by keeping the idea that Tempest here slightly reversed the situation by putting Anticlea now as Brian who cheats on his wife. As the story goes we enumerate events where Thomas, an illegitimate son of Brian plays Odysseus and finally meets his Penelope (Gloria).

On establishing from the other side of Brian and Mary's characters in reference to the godfather Zeus and Hera, there are quite open debates in the ancient mythology of Zeus's myriad affairs and illegitimate sons, and similarly Olympian queen Hera's ill-treatment of her sons like as Hephaestus etcetera. Olympian King Zeus most of his time spent in throwing thunder at other gods, making love with earthlings, giving seed to many unwanted sons, and reassuring everything is in his under control, this sets an example for Brian's character who like Zeus seeks Jane as a partner of an extramarital affair, and spends most of his time in the company of booze and liquor bottles. Even though Thomas is his own blood, he cannot do anything to embrace and come close to hugging Thomas but remains limited, and concealed like Zeus who for many instances only watched from Olympus and did nothing. Mary just like Hera hates her husband Brian, and is afraid of if her son Clive turns out as Brian as he grows. Brian's infidelity is the biggest insecurity for Mary and Brian's act proves that Mary as being a woman has been deprived of all womanly activities except housekeeping. Mary here sets a similar attitude to Hera who also remains insecure about her husband's affairs with other women. Mary hates her husband Brian and, spends most of her time either with alcohol or television because she is so sick of Brian [3,4,10].

Tempest in the book deliberately calls Mary "Brand New Medea" (318) and the reason for calling Mary as "Medea", refers to mythology and the story of the daughter of the king Aëtes of Colchis and wife of the mythical hero Jason, "Medea" (Graves 616). Medea has been infamous for the killing of her own children not because they had been involved in some misconduct but because Medea's purpose in killing her own children was to teach a lesson to her own husband Jason who abandons his wife and plans to marry Glauce. In the case of Mary whom the poet calls "Medea" the addition of the words "Brand New" refers to the reincarnation of the character of Medea in Mary. The story of Medea refers to the story of Mary who too seems failing to support her son Clive morally, mentally, and socially. Instead of playing the role of an ideal mother, she breaks herself down due to Brian's failure to support his son. Consistently quarreling with Brian, she forgets to embrace her son Clive and makes herself a victim of alcoholism and carelessness. Trapped in booze and before TV, she in a way seems becoming "Medea" who not physically killing her son but most likely setting an example of hollow parenting, and socially and emotionally pushing her son towards the bleakness of the dark side of society where crime prevails and black ideas haunt. Tempest's calling Medea to Mary completely justifies the ways of what Medea did to her children. Tempest's heroes of the poem seek their heroism in the everyday struggle which the poet calls "everyday odysseys" (90). It might have been possible that the ancient heroes of mythological stories slew the dragons, and picked their teeth the showcase their bravery but in the modern world, all stops to everyday odysseys. Tempest's mention of "dragon's teeth" recalls the event of Cadmus's bravery when he killed the guarding dragon of a river and the dragon belonged to the god of war Ares. Cadmus's slaying of the dragon causes him to serve Ares for 8 years. When Cadmus slays the water dragon of the Spring of Ares, thus appears the goddess Athena and suggesting him to sow the dragon's teeth in the field.

Interconnective lives:

As soon as Cadmus sows the teeth, a fierce army rises from the ground. Cadmus tosses a coin among them and it turns out a fierce fight among them killing almost everybody except five warriors with whom Cadmus built the city of Thebes. It is clear that in our time, we do not have to fight dragons and secure their teeth. We do not have to slay monsters but the struggles, and problems of everyday man are not lesser than the haunting monsters. Every day man is so much occupied with the horror of life, memories, anxiety, depression etcetera that it does not count as lesser than the monsters. Clearly, we have our monsters and dragons (metaphoric to dragons and monsters) to fight, and for the showcase of our bravery, we are bound to overcome

everything. Maybe Odysseus' expedition was full of unearthly events and, for him, this was his odysseys but modern men have their own struggles, insecurities, and ambition, and they have to count on them as their odysseys [7,8,9,10].

. She says throughout every age there have been, love, hope, memories, fear, dreams etcetera which leave no difference between us and ancient gods and heroes. For the human race, all those emotions and feelings are as old as “the language of blood” (98). Kevin, a man who always adores his wife and wants to bestow the best of himself on Jane, throughout the poem, remains mute and out of commission. Among gods and goddesses, lived a god who always favoured mankind and never asked for the price, called Prometheus, and he stole fire from Olympus and gifts to mankind. He had to suffer the anger of the Olympian king and all father Zeus. Kevin too seems pathetic, and helpless knowing every action of his wife Jane. He like as Prometheus wants to dedicate everything he has to his wife but in return gets hurt and betrayed by his own wife. Tempest in the poem writes, “Kevin, a God who knows better than most how to settle for less” (216-217). Wilderness has been a fear of gods and mankind. When gods doubted their weaknesses and actions, wilderness caught them. Wilderness is something that everybody is afraid of. The characters of Clive and Spider represent that wilderness of the society in which everybody is afraid and denies getting close to it. The question may be raised as to how this wilderness is aroused and who gets the responsibility to provoke it. Clive as the real blood of Brian and Mary, gathers this wilderness from the everyday lives of his parents. He has grown up seeing the actions of his parents such as quarrels, a failed marriage, misunderstandings, and meaninglessness, and all that he saw throughout his life, fuels his character to be part of the wilderness of society. Mary's over-drinking habits because of Brian, pushes Mary to forget about the duty of an ideal mother, and when Clive returns from school, she falls asleep. Clive grows up watching this daily scenario and thinking how much muck people are. Clive and Terry represent the characters of Penelope's suitor who in the absence of Odysseus threaten Penelope to either marry one of them or they will rape her. Clive also represents the god of war Ares who even at the slightest mistake, gets ready for the war. Clive's hate for humans is derived from his home and seeing his parents fighting with each other. Growing up while witnessing daily domestic violence, provoked him to act every time with violence, and for society violence always symbolizes wilderness. When Clive gets acquainted with Terry AKA Spider who is playing football on his own, and right that moment Clive approaches Terry to join him. Terry just like Clive, is brought up and taken care of by his grandmother which points toward the isolated lives of both Clive and Terry. Clive even living in the company of his drunkard parents, gets isolated as if he has been brought up by himself only and on the other hand, his newly acquainted mate Terry who does not have parental guardianship but is fostered by his grandmother. Tempest emancipates with the idea of segregation which applies to both Clive and Spider and inquires about ways of western parenting. Isolation and ignorance are the two major reasons that set foreground parameters for Clive and Terry's fondness for wilderness. Nobody seems interested in reasoning the way Clive and Spider are brought up, and soon both of them become “a two-man nation” (522). The implication caused on the life of Clive because of his parents' domestic violence to each other, can be seen during an incident when Clive suggests Terry to go and propose the girl he likes and Terry gets rejected by Jemma, the best friend of Gloria. On seeing Terry's disappointed face, Clive's wilderness bursts out, and they start believing in the policy where humans are muck, filthy, and souls who cannot understand others. The very isolation they witnessed during their early periods turned them off to the world and from now on they believe in each other only. Tempest composes. “Gods in their synagogues” (519) and these gods are Clive and Spider who seek their brother, mother, father, friend, gods, and even temple in each other. In response to myths, we have this serious business of similarities between gods and humans since whatever gods possess such as anger, war, tragedy, love, etc. are something we also possess. This is what

makes us godly and heroic and in no matter lesser than gods. Tempest does not want to draw a line that establishes dissimilarities between the divine and the human world, rather all she wants, is the connection to the godly world. Tragedies are not limited to the human world only, but gods also faced similar acts in their times. Wars and transgression are not limited to the human world only, but these too had been the pursuits of the empyrean world. Abductions, agony, and hysteria are not wrongdoings of men's world only, but the Olympian also bathed in them. Clive and Terry are not only here during this time, but there also have been Ares, Hades, Eris, and many more who hated fellow beings and always thought of conquering everybody. The character of Clive can also be imagined from the perspective of modern-day Telemachus who was the son of Odysseus (MacDonald 175), and Clive is the son of Brian but even being a member of their emotionally and socially fractured home, Clive like as Telemachus remains far away from his father's image and parenting. He grows up as a child who is emotionally neglected and restricted. When Tempest in the poem addresses gods for grave consequences and writes, "Or, sometimes, they turned themselves into animals, /came down upon us and raped us." (772- 773), she calls attention to so many Greek gods and heroes of immortal and mortal worlds who either raped humans and other goddesses forcefully or by disguising them. Tempest may refer to the rapes of the Queen of Sparta Leda who bore Helen (Graves 206-208) and a nymph Callisto the daughter of the king Arcadia Lycaon by Zeus (Ovid 417-440), and the abduction of Persephone also known as Core the Greek Goddess of Spring by the God of Underworld Hades (Graves 89-93). Other instances of rapes by gods may recall the rape of Medusa in the temple of Athena by Poseidon (753-803), and the brutal rape of Cassandra the daughter of Troy king Priam by the Sparta hero Ajax the Lesser and later forced to be as the concubine of Agamemnon the king of Mycenae (Graves 700-701). Tempest also writes, "In the stories, the gods walked among us. //Fought with each other to save us, 'cos they loved us" (770, 771). The lines refer to the most pre-eminent occasions when gods fought among each other to save mankind and to make us believe that they love us and care about us. To assert mythical importance to Tempest's above-quoted lines, we may refer to the incident when Prometheus steals fire from Olympus and hands it over to mankind so that we can remain comfortable on Earth. He fights with the gods and gets sentenced to a brutal death for an eternal period. Prometheus's sacrifice determines godly love for mankind and asks us to seek our faith in them. It was Prometheus who created and crafted mankind. It was he who holds the authority on mankind even though he loves us and oblates his life for us. Prometheus sets an example before us to believe in the empyrean and also helps Tempest to qualify in her statement. Our past always inspires us and lays down the foundation of our generation in every possible way [15,16]. History, myths, folklore, and anecdotes are the medium through which there is a thriving of education and morals. Greek bards unlike Greek philosophers, do not fix and restrict their cannons of knowledge to sheer logic but hold an easy way of mythos precisely, which is more persuading, and fascinating to the populace. Tempest's poem starts with domestic crisis and rapture in family relationships and goes on to the peak of wild scenarios like as violence, bloodshed, theft, agony, and hate, and ends with a gentle cathartic stop. From blood to love goes the story of the poem as if Odysseus's journey takes place with various adventures and dangers but settles with an enchanting summit of Thomas and Gloria.

The power of storytelling

As Thomas grows up and becomes more optimist and hard working to get placed at the right place of honour, he travels far away from his memories of Gloria and seems unqualified and self-oriented to handle the priority to love and care of Gloria since she is the only who held him in his struggling time and always maintained her faith in him. In an incident in the poem, Thomas seems losing his faith and care for Gloria. He forgets the ways he loved his partner and adored her. When he finally sets himself up for a fancy job that he always desired, he

emotionally and physically starts going away from Gloria. Once offered and accompanied by his fellow mates, he walks into a pub and there in the scene, he has been allured and serenaded by a pub dancer. This scene can be compared to Odysseus's escapades when he goes out in the Trojan War and while returning, bogs himself down with other alluring women, for example, Circe, Calypso, Nausicaa etcetera. Just like Odysseus who for a period spends his time with other women around the world and eventually starts escaping Penelope from his memories, Thomas too gets bogged down in a situation when for a while, he forgets Gloria the love of his life [10,14]. Thomas signifies the very same attitude that Odysseus reveals when he embarks on his adventurous life. Thomas in an image of Odysseus acts the way Odysseus did earlier, while Gloria becomes the most acquainted figure of the great ancient mythical world, Penelope. Gloria's just like Penelope who remains loyal to his Odysseus now as Thomas. Gloria possesses no cunningness and temptations to the outside world, but she has been portrayed as fully grown up, and very well acquainted with the harms and goods of the world. She has grown up learning things on her own and works in a bar behind the liquor desk as a barmaid. Every day she witnesses grim, happy, gamut, and sad faces that make her even braver. When Terry and Clive arrive at the bar for taking advantage of Gloria and try to molest and rape her. At that moment she has no company of others and learns the fact that nothing is all right now, and she is in great danger by these two unwanted men. In the story of Odysseus and Penelope, we encounter a scene when Penelope has been threatened and on the verge of being raped by unwanted suitors who come to force their authority over Odysseus's kingdom in his absence. That very scene sets a similar arrangement here in the case of Gloria who now is threatened by Terry and Clive. Gloria as like Penelope struggles to save herself from these randomly emerged unwanted suitors who eventually pop up into her bar to ravish her. Terry and Clive can be compared with Penelope's unwanted suitors, but unlike the original incident of Penelope where suitors come to reign over Odysseus's possession and his wife, Terry and Clive seem beady-eyed only in Gloria. In the absence of Thomas who finds himself hindered by his over-ambition and self-centeredness, Terry and Clive attack Gloria initially, she is threatened and feared by these two bullies, but as soon as she conquers this fear, she is ready to fight back until she is down. Thomas finally returns to his senses and removes the water vapour of his over-ambitiousness, and runs for his compassionate beloved who is ready to fight back against Terry and Clive. In the original story of Homer, Odysseus returns to Ithaca, kills all the suitors, and then saves his wife Penelope, but here in the poem *Brand New Ancients*, Tempest introduces a little twist in the story, and Thomas does not seem in position to defend Gloria, but he encounters the boldest appearance of Gloria. He witnesses what he never came to know. He freezes at his place and watches how his beautiful beloved brings justice to Terry and Clive. Tempest brings an ancient mythic palette among us and revives old myths through our actions. Gloria is regarded as "the burning daughter of Zeus" (1123) by Tempest in the poem. When Gloria defends herself and hits Terry and Clive in the bar, she is not lesser than one of Zeus's most powerful daughters Athena. Gloria transforms her personality into Athena's personality and serves justice to Terry and Clive. The story of *Brand New Ancients* starts with infidelity and ends in a peaceful, happy reunion of Thomas and Gloria which refers to the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope. Myths at first hand can be taken as only fanciful stories, but on the other hand as a journey of truth, morality, and epitome of the knowledge. Tempest also calls Thomas "Spartan of Troy" in the following lines, "He feels like a Spartan in Troy. //He feels like his heart is destroyed" (631, 632). Through these lines, she builds an ancient mythic image of Spartans who after the Trojan War, lost almost everything when they returned to their homes. Similarly, Thomas after achieving success, the accomplishment of ambition, desired job, and fame, fails to reciprocate love to Gloria [11,15]. He finds himself unsuccessful in embracing Gloria, and when he realizes his actions, he feels more guilty and heartbroken. When Thomas in his initial days of struggle gets an opportunity to work as an artist, as a creative sketch master, at that time, he is called "Dionysus" by the poet. Dionysus is one of the highest pantheon Greek gods who sit on

Olympus with Zeus. He was Zeus's son born out of a mortal affair with Semele, the princess of Thebes. Thomas's dressing style and fondness for his high ambitions set him in parallel with Dionysus who has been escorted as the Greek god of wine, music, madness, and intoxication. Tempest points out in the poem that Thomas is now a brand new Dionysus who madly craves fame, success, and love, and is almost liked by all the girls around him. In a few lines of the poem Tempest emphasizes a subject where everybody seems to be mad about being successful and appreciated by everybody, and so does our hero Thomas. Thomas's success, the quest for fame, and power are very common to all human beings. Everybody around us little mad about these prospects of life. Everybody seems enchanted by the longing desire to be famous. The poet also puts the contemporary situation of our society where success is the only source of a just and powerful life. Among us walk so many Dionysus who possess fame and respect brought by money and success, and to those Dionysus, the poet calls them "the perm-tanned gods" (746). These perm-tanned gods can be seen in reality shows, TV programs, movies etcetera. We run after these gods and worship them like gods. Dionysus has never left but during all that he has been living within us, among us, and frequently dealing with us. Human desire, passion for getting more, the madness of fame, intoxication of love, fury, and greed leave us no lesser than those gods who chaired in their gold chairs on Olympus. In ancient stories, when heroes return from the war after victory, they used to spend their quality time with female sex-slaves to celebrate their victory, and something very similar can be seen in the poem when Thomas has been seduced by a female lap dancer Michelle. Thomas's war in the poem is to get success and finally, he gets it in hand, and to celebrate this he accompanies his fellow friends in the bar where he seems to be trapped just like Odysseus who had been seduced by Circe, Calypso etcetera while his return from the Trojan War to home [16,17].

Universal themes and timeless truths

Tempest mentions other characters in the poem who are Sam, Davey, and Geraldine and when the poetic persona of the poet compares these common folks with ancient mythic gods, she means them to be tagged as heroes. "These are our heroes," says Tempest. These common folks have nothing to do. They are out of work and seem tired and trapped in this godly and pitiful world. These heroes are now "permanently trapped somewhere between heroic and the pitiful" (8, 9).

Tempest's heroes in the poem may metaphorically refer to traditional Greek mythical heroes but are not set in their domain rather characters of Brand New Ancients are everyday heroes set in the contemporary period. The ultimate character of Brian sits at the central chair of the story as if Zeus rules from his chair on Olympus. The image of Zeus has been infamous for his numerous affairs with immortals and mortals, and Brian too can be compared with Zeus who is involved in an unofficial affair with Jane. Zeus knows everything but more often he prefers to remain quiet. In the case of Brian, we propose that like Zeus, Brian is also knowing everything happening around him but sits silent on his own. Most of the sons and daughters born out of Zeus's affairs with several women, remain out of the sight of Zeus and spend their lives either without a fatherly figure or in disguise by considering someone else as their father. Brian now in an image of Zeus, sails his life carefree, in booze or quarrel with his wife Mary. By the end of the book, Brian flies to Thailand and spends the rest of the days of his life with Asian girls and escorts. Far from his home looking back to his past and reminiscing the mistakes and his takes on them, he proposes that everything he did, buys him happiness and comfort. He realizes if he could do something or if he could re-write his past. His attitude seems more like Zeus who sets his goal to always remain busy in popping out affairs. Tempest gives her readers a hint by mentioning the name of "Olympus" in the poem and writes, "But here, in paradise, this fair Olympus where he'd come to live," (1269, 1270). Perhaps Tempest's mention of Brian's fellow Western friends Ian, Graham, and Sid is referring to fellow Olympian gods such as Poseidon, Apollo, and Ares who sit at Zeus's table on Olympus.[1718].

Conclusion

Brand New Ancients brings two different world and collaborate them so creatively that everything breathes once again. All the ancient myths are witnessing their existence in the human world. Gods have been speaking and residing within us. Our gods are the people around us, burdened with daily office tasks, work, responsibilities etcetera, and cared for with love, affection, care, and support. Ages come and rest, but these gods are always here with us, among us, dying and then again resurrected. Our gods are the mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, and friends who escort us in every possible way. The history of the human world is always trapped somewhere between the godly and the pitiful. There may not be any Olympus but heroes and gods among us are reigning and constructing collective human consciousness. Myths bring reality and reflection of morals, virtues, and the history of the human world before us. We cannot justify myths as mere fascination. Myths talk to us and teach us simultaneously. These are our ancient myths turning into contemporary myths at all stages of life.

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