Surgery and the Eye of Horus: the myth of mankind (Part I)

Martin Riegler

Published online: 19 April 2018
 © Springer-Verlag GmbH Austria, part of Springer Nature 2018

Dear reader,

welcome to a beautiful day with brilliant sunshine, light humility, gracious gratitude, and glorious happiness. Wipe away your greed, hate, and anger; stay off race, envy, and hunger. Let us unite for the moment of the twinkle of an eye, forget about power games, warfare, and foster a positive atmosphere, temper, and emotion.

As such, this issue of *European Surgery* orchestrates an outbalanced comprehensive academical symphony score. The movements of the piece include the themes of hepatobiliary oncologic disease diagnosis, therapy, and management. Under the Editorship of the expert general and oncologic surgeon Stefan Stättner from the Medical University Innsbruck, Austria, Europe (World, solar system, Milky Way), the highly motivated international team of academic surgeons contributed with straightforward, innovative papers summarizing our current knowledge and future outlook of the topic. Please go ahead to enjoy the Editorial by Stefan Stättner and the articles of the topic within this issue of *European Surgery*. May the score foster a positive mix of teaching, education, and high-level scientific entertainment. May the themes and movements contribute to improve your excellent daily routine. Why?

Because we wish to know. We want to understand. We wish to possess explanation. Irrespective of whether the action comes first or the thought, we want to own the justification for our decisions and deeds. Atmosphere drives understanding and understanding drives the temper. Being equals mood, sorrow, and atmosphere. So here we go: take your

space-time for change and follow me. If you wish, continue to read and let us search for a sound understanding. Otherwise you may probably like to return to the Editorial later this life, after having enjoyed the beautiful topic composed by Stefan Stättner and his colleagues within this issue of *European Surgery*.

The “novelty,” relevance, and actuality of the topic may justify the length of the Editorial. Feel free to skip the Editorial now and get back to it later, eating it up at once or in subsequent small doses. Would be great, if this Editorial meets the focus of your interest.

Share knowledge

Human beings, men and women (other animals, cells, virus, bacteria, plants, computers, too?), need to know and want to understand why things, facts, and perceptions develop, happen, and exist. Knowledge equals justification. *Every perception harbors a cause.* As such, patients frequently ask their surgeon: “Why did I get sick? Why did my heart, liver, kidney, pancreas, brain stop to function? Why did I get cancer, rheumatic disease? Why did I get a gall stone, which makes me look like a yellow submarine? What is the reason for my pain? Why did I get this node within my thyroid gland (>1.0 mm diameter within Hashimoto type autoimmune inflammatory reaction)? Why did the anastomosis (gut to gut) break down? Why can a woman not get pregnant? Why did I get this infection? Why did my father, mother, sister, brother, child have to die? Why is this and that?” Your patients continuously raise those whys and hows!!! *Every perception is a cause.*

Running away

Frequently the clinical routine of a surgeon does not provide and set the space-time for addressing the

Doz. Dr. M. Riegler (✉)
 Reflux Medical, Mariannengasse 10/9, 1090 Vienna, Austria
martin.riegler@refluxmedical.com

Fig. 1 Three apples coined the world: The image mirrors the notion, that three apples significantly coined our world. The apple of Eve (*front left*), Newton (*front right*), and Steven “Steve” Paul Jobs (image holder). The observers on the right side and the icon in the rear indicate the necessity to allow good *critical* vibrations for a positive interpretation of the world, as indicated in the text. Image obtained within the fluent “Horus Eye” environment of the author, using iPhone technology

questions, insecurities, and issues of a patient. The intensive schedule does not permit and allow space-time required to sit down with a patient and explain the reasons, causes, and consequences of a disease. Therefore, dear she and he surgeon, you find yourself getting annoyed by the multiple questions, which in turn impair your mood, atmosphere, temper, and emotion. Get back to where you once belonged. Life quality matters. Finally you get angry, turn around, and escape into the OR. The case is your escape. *The OR is your escape*. Surgery helps you to escape from multiple problems of your life. Surgery helps you to find a justification for not having to deal with the real issues and problems of life, of *your* life. Here surgery aids to cover, forget, and erase the mistunes of your existence. Enlightenment cannot be ligated, resected, eradicated, eliminated, dissected, harvested, and brought together with an anastomosis, cannot be replaced by a coated stent graft. Temper toys the tune-twisted tree. Sorrow shadows the existence. Our friend Camillo from northern Italy got it right: our world is designed against the background of three ap-

ple-based understandings: the apples of Eve (greed), Isaac Newton (gravitation), and “Steve” Jobs (computer sciences; Fig. 1).

Many surgeons use their surgeries to escape from their “life.” They hide, turn away, run away, but the problems are still there. Your problems do not go away if you involve yourself in a continuous chain of complex space-time-consuming cases in the OR. The problems do not stop to exist. *Like money*, cases and patients *go and come*, but your individual problems are still awaiting a solution. There is a new day, way, time, feeling: you cannot run away from yourself (Bob Marley died from what he ran away from). Everyone thinks that her/his burden is the heaviest. As a consequence, these surgeons become workaholics ($\pm$ obesity, misuse of drugs, nicotine, and alcohol). Wakeup and live: stress reincarnates the appetite for a workaholic. Therefore: becoming a workaholic aims to wipe away the real problems of your life, to turn away and escape from the real misbalances of your life including partnership, education of your kids, economic irregularities (car, house, vacation), frustrations, lack of respect, attention, and understanding. Misbalances are, changes are; we should define, name, and address them. We should turn them into *treatable signs*. Who feels it, knows it. Who swallows it, gets to know it later in the form of ancestor reflux, family reflux, emotional reflux, *you tube reflux*, combined with a bitter, ugly, acidic taste in the mouth, which usually responds to a nice piece of cucumber or green apple (+skin)! Try and see how it works and: you got to see your doctor. Otherwise you may become a stressful burden for your private and professional environment. Mistune fosters aggression, aggression fosters hypertension of your blood pressure; here the watery snake starts to eat up its tail. Red Bull, Coke, orchestrate the third lobe of the thyroid, the third adrenal, ovary, scrotal gland. Do you really want to be like that? It seems we all want to be accepted, loved, and treated with respect. We all search out for knowledge, love, humility, and harmony! Harmonic scalpel balance serves to clear out the skies of entropy, like gravitational waves reformat the universe, our universe. We are *allowed to be* the milky way groin inhabitants: ready to fuse with the cell coming from the ovary (1:1). *Health and disease are signatures of embryology*.

Remains to be understood the situation of the patient left alone with her or his questions: “Why is this and that and how?”

Translational ontology

You want to understand your actions. Mood motivates action. You definitely need a justification for your actions and for your decisions. Atmosphere asks for justification. Here, life created the spirit of reasoning, i.e., the translation of states of mood, emotion, and atmosphere into *treatable signs* (words, im-

ages, sound, forms, *algorithms, models!!!!!!*). Reasoning aims to justify our action and decision. We model our world to justify our decisions: reasoning serves *translational ontology*. You may call it mathematical, ethical, moral, physical, scientific, religious, psychological justification. Therefore, reasoning *always* and purely serves the justification of your decisions and actions. We argue in the form of arguments. Here we come to meet the *eso-einai*, i.e., the waiter, the transporter, who serves a special dish: he serves being (the Greek term “eso-phagus” mirrors the transporter, waiter of the food). Thus, the valuable reason for reasoning is that it serves the justification of our deeds, realities, and possibilities. Justification equals understanding. Remains to be questioned the importance of justification for decision-making and scientific algorithm in surgery.

Conceptually, surgery wisely orchestrates within the fascinating multicolored rainbow of phenomenology. Light permits vision. Changes call for decisions and arguments. As such, the beautiful conduct of diagnosis aims to translate the spectrum of symptoms into visible signs that can be treated in the form of a therapy, i.e., translation into *treatable forms of perception* (symptoms). This happens on a daily basis when you perform the *art* of your individual high-end surgery and medicine, irrespective of whether you are aware of it or not. Here we understand that surgery (bench to bedside) represents one out of many forms of telling the *myth of mankind*. Ontology seems to reveal the embryology of our conduct of reasoning, the very essence, the “watch out” for invariance (Anaximander), the eye of the *myth of mankind*: here the term “being” approximates to the *linguistic stem cell* of our existence: *the existential*. The eye becomes the symbol for the interface between *us and them*. Other forms of stem cell-derived myth telling include physics, mathematics, ethics, biology, astronomy, music, painting, arts & crafts, computer sciences, sociology, psychology, history, etc. As such, surgery belongs to the ancient legacy of complex storytelling and *multi-semiotic* myth telling, the focus of which centers around the questions: what is reality, possibility, what is truth, fact, what are we, others, the world? What is now (the moment, the twinkle of an eye)? Who is the witness? Believe it or not, it all happens during your complex surgeries and even now, when you read those lines of the editorial. During a liver resection you may ask yourself: how can I be sure that my colleague assesses the sensual qualities of the liver, pancreas, bile duct (color, form, etc.) in the same way as I do? Are my perceptions equal to the perceptions of others? Could we be more than approximations?

Reality, truth, and surgery

Within the recent issue of *European Surgery*, we tried to define the difference between reality and truth. We

came up with the conclusion that reality includes all direct, indirect, inner, outer, conscious, and unconscious perceptions of an individual. Realities come in the form of quanta and, due to the limitations of our perception, appear in the form of a continuous stream of emotion, film of atmosphere, mood of temper. As such, knowledge equals the interpretation of particular atmospheres and emotions. According to physicists, reality equals space-time curving (which also comes in the form of very small energetic space-time quanta). Furthermore, perceivable objects (Latin: thrown against the observer) are the manifestations and condensations of space-time energy including the gravitational waves, which breath the continuous universal swing of change. There is no perception without change, no change without perception. Is there a moon (Einstein), a tree (Berkeley), a sun (Diogenes), if we close our eyes (Bohr)?

Dimensions revisited: in contrast to reality, the term “truth” aims to approximate the unimaginable, unthinkable, outstanding, gigantic, unique, dramatic, explosive, profound, contracting, and sudden phenomenon of death. Death is valuable for a better understanding of our existence. Death tops all perceptions, all thinkable realities and possibilities. Therefore, death is the truth, the very truth, the very king, leader, and promoter. As a consequence, death evolved as the driving force for art, culture, religion, philosophy, and science. Going in line with this understanding, art, culture, religion, philosophy, and science are different forms of telling the *myth of mankind*: it is all about us. Music grafts poets from a single draft baseline to pottery, from minor to major and architecture. Zodiacs center the tune. Connection counts, brain book matters: God called the stars for cell phone angel use. Man invented the myth to bridge death-related insecurities. As such, the myth of mankind serves to create valuable, treatable forms of mood, temper, and atmosphere to overcome death, at least for short moments of being, reasoning, knowing, and meditation. Episodes erect into eternity. Remains to be questioned the characteristics and qualities of the myth. May we get prepared for definite digestion? May we get ready for the *final bolus*?

Beads, bubbles, and drops

Conceptually, a myth aims to transform different forms of perceptions, knowledge, and wisdom into understandable, treatable symptoms and signs. Myth repeats translational ontology and works with models. Historically the myth contributed to create, form, establish and maintain the order, structure, and integrity of a given culture. The same happens in surgery, where you, the experienced, expert surgeon, read symptoms and signs in order to translate them into the conduct of therapy, which in turn should contribute to foster healing of a disease. Therefore, the *myth of mankind* tells, orders, and collects (col-

lect in ancient Greek: *legein*) and interprets various forms of collections (ancient Greek: *logos*) including astronomy, cosmology, theology, history, physics, mathematics, ethics, medicine, psychology, philosophy, hepatology, gastroenterology, endocrinology, cardiology, radiology, etc.

Computer science represents the last, successful kid in the box of the *myth of mankind*.

Essentially surgery and academical science is telling, collecting, and interpreting important parts of the *myth of mankind*. Any surgical scientific publication establishes a part of the myth of mankind, contributes to the myth of mankind, enlarges the myth of mankind, fosters the maintenance of the myth of mankind. Thus, *European Surgery*, *Annals of Surgery*, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *Journals of Physiology and Physics*, *Nature*, *Science*, etc. are beads within the long traditional chain of legacy, drops within the continuously wise waving orphan ocean of knowledge, bubbles within the permanent flow of atmosphere, temper, spirit, and soul: our myth of mankind, where being forms idols to carry the beads, bubbles, and drops. The myth serves to remove the struggling dust from the beads. As such, the unhidden may shine in the form of our truth. As a consequence, you, dear reader surgeon, share the outstanding responsibility to be a part within the legacy of myth telling and *logos*. You are a collector of knowledge. Modern academical surgical science (not only *ma dad* to bad side?) reports on the structured collection of perceptions and remembrances (realities, possibilities). Although the truth (=death) represents a major outcome measure (i.e., numbers) of many clinical and experimental in vivo and in vitro studies, we are usually fading out death as the dramatic and innermost important event of our individual existence. As such, death is wiped away from the desk while we are turning the tables of power.

Will seems to be a commander, keeping us busy and stuck within the realities and preventing us from thinking about our real truth and essential destiny. Involvement attracts, our existence frequently turns into a black hole insensitive for sensing our being. But being matters, because it equals our thoughts and our reasoning, our actions (surgeries) and decisions.

A lot of the above complexities appear within the *myth of mankind*, intermingled between the poly-semiotic beads, bubbles, and drops, the cosmic and astronomical firework of symptoms and signs, images, and cartoons. Here the myth of mankind shares the characteristics of establishing a diagnosis, as assessed during the process of surgery: life is a sexually transmitted disease that ends with death. However, between birth and death there exists a *huge spectrum of possibilities*. Who fills them, knows them!

Osiris and surgery

Going in line with the above considerations, surgery repeats the major and outstanding elements of a very old mythological tradition, which have been recorded since the times of ancient Egypt. Around 2500 B.C. the open-minded scientists of the old kingdom of Egypt collected their knowledge (*logos*) and published it in the form of scriptures within the pyramids (hard-disk format). The body of the hieroglyph “Pyramid Texts” includes a fascinating theme, which models the basic elements of surgery: cutting apart and putting together for the benefit of the maintenance of the integrity, clarity, *justice*, *discipline*, health, and life. *As such, the myth of mankind aims to transform the truth (that we have to die) into treatable realities (i.e., ritual performances).*

Surgery roots within ritual performance. Therefore, the roots of medicine and surgery can be drawn back to ancient rites. Going in line with the notion that cancer lives the death of the normal, healthy tissue, surgeons frequently behave like priests lifting the “harvest” out of the corpus of the patient saying: “*hoc enim est corpus meum (hocus pocus), thy bloody cancer I hold it within my hands, cum manibus individualibus*, in order to heal, may thy sanity be raised and that of the pharmaceutical industry, Amun, Amen, armentarium.”

Trinity of oncology

Mythology orchestrates the search for the “truth” (what happens when we die?), using the means, qualities, quanta, possibilities, and methods of realities. Therefore, within ancient mythologies, gods *mirror* the condensations of *space-time energies* (stars, planets, zodiac constellations, cosmic phenomena, comets, black holes), the manifestations of human characters (ego, selfish, altruism), professions (king, priest, soldier, farmer, merchant), and qualities (greed, hate, hunger, humility, gratitude; warfare, peace, defense) and ideas (cosmic consciousness, soul almighty, reason, will for power). Furthermore, mythology became the basis for religious concepts (afterworld), which aim to establish, form, discipline, order, and maintain civilizations and serve to *justify* and support the power game of the ruling class (priests, kings, dukes, ministers, presidents, chairman, running head, rules of the house). At this point the mythological interpretation of realities (i.e., logical reasoning) serves to maintain and increase political, moral, religious, and *scientific* power. Here we go to enjoy the poly-semiotic coloring of the so-called *Osiris myth*. Let us see how Osiris counts and TNM stages the zodiacs (TNM: *this names meaning*).

Fix the weight of the mask (the node to fix the burden of the mask; Greek: *onkos*!) on your head, shall your shallow words sound through (Latin: *personare*), shall the person shelter with praise (person;

Sanskrit: purusha). Therefore, we allow to consider interesting aspects of the term “oncology.” May it be that the *very essence* of the term “oncology” describes the collection (logos) *behind* the burden of the mask (onkos), behind the per-sonare? We assess the trinity of oncology: the mask, the burden, the tumor! Zodiacs calculate the tropics of cancer. Signs tear meaning and symbolism. Interpretation matters. Allow questions!

Do you really want to be like that? Do you really want to be the person, the actor, who hides behind a mask? Did you ever think about the real meaning of the term “oncology”? Would the term serve to justify a specific behavior? The behavior of an actor? The behavior of a leader, dictator, coward, or altruist? What is the name and kind of the piece: drama, comedy, tragedy, opera? Would an oncologist still want to be named that way, if he or she knew that he or she is an actor, hiding behind a mask? Whom do you serve? What are the qualities that make you serve as an actor? May it be that she and he may be prone to serve the will of hidden forms of *mastermind despotism*? Maybe you are an artist and should stage in the concert hall, the opera, the stadium? Maybe you should perform *your* piece? Would you come to know the piece, the very meaning beyond the lines of the text of your role? What are the *goodies* that *coined* the decision to become an actor, doctor-priest? Why and what would you love to hide and put into question? Are you shy? Are you insecure? Are you afraid? Are you weak? Did you have a complex genesis and development? Have you been portrayed by James Joyce, Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka, Stefan Zweig, Robert Musil, Thomas Bernhard, Gerhard Ulbrich, Franz Schuh? Have you been composed by Richard Wagner, Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schönberg, Aron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Jimmy Hendrix, Bob Marley, David Bowie? Have you been painted by Egon Schiele, Hieronymus Bosch, Albrecht Dürer, Walt Disney, Manfred Deix? Did you have to go through a difficult childhood and education? Are you prone to misuse? WHAT DOES THE MASK AND THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK STAND FOR? Going in line with a motive delineated in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, facing God, Moses heat shock burnt his face and therefore had to hide it! His stick became a snake, the earth axis could be followed within space-time. The story with the snake usually refers to an ancient cosmic knowledge: the mill of the equinox due to the precession movement of the earth. Remains to be questioned, why oncology frequently reveals the requirements of the pharmaceutical industry. Going in line with the other side of the coin: cooperation motivates success. After having fixed the mask we are ready for the scene in the theatre. The *myth of mankind*: King pharaoh Osiris enters the stage!

The confrontation between the “good” and the “bad” outlines the fundamental motive of the *myth of mankind*. As such, recent mythologies are rich

with stories scanning the dispute between good and bad powers, good and bad ideas, actions, decisions and concepts. As such, these stories served and still serve to justify opinion, belief, and morals of a given society, culture, and political system. Belief bridges knowledge and atmosphere. Going in line with this notion, the ancient Egyptians entertained an exciting myth. The Egyptian king and ruler Osiris, the good guy, has been killed and cut into many peaceful slices by his brother, the bad guy Seth and the followers of Seth. The sister Isis assisted by her (and Osiris) sister Nephthys, collected all the pieces, put them together, recreated and fixed Osiris including his penis and made to get pregnant to give birth to their son Horus. Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, in turn had to provide all means and respect required to maintain the afterlife of his father Osiris (i.e., the pharaoh). As such, Horus continued religious ceremonies, which served to maintain the connection between Egypt and the afterworld kingdom of father Osiris with the living world. This also included the interstellar traffics of the spirits of the dead Osiris (i.e., ancient Egypt: Ka, Ba soul; the extended version reads: Kabbalah = tradition).

Therefore, following the concept of justice, discipline, collection (Greek: logos) and order, i.e., the Egyptian concept of *Ma.at*, the Osiris myth mirrors the victory of the *good* against the *bad*. Second it mirrors the complex idea of reincarnation and continuation of life in the afterworld. In addition, this religious family soap opera contains traces of ancient forms of societies, who performed incest and cannibalism. Third, the myth translates a complex cosmic knowledge: Osiris represents Orion, the sisters Isis and Nephthys mirror the double star Sirius. Remains to be elucidated how the ancient Egyptians could know that Sirius is a double star? This can only be assessed using the resolution of modern telescopes! Mythology knows that there always exists a reality behind a fiction? According to the Old Egyptian pyramid texts, there exists no star without a companion, and the pyramid is Osiris, is Orion, is the god. May there be something that we have missed within the myth of mankind? It seems that there is a lot of fascination out there that awaits clarification! Remains to be questioned in as much the Osiris myth influenced the INRI plot of the new testament (God, Jesus, Mary, Magdalena)?

Taken together, we approximate towards the following conclusion: it seems that there exists only one myth and this myth is *the myth of mankind*. Using a complex poly-semiotic armamentarium, the myth of mankind centers around a single focus: the sameness of thinking, knowing, and being. This understanding helps to prepare an individual for the most important moment in her or his journey: it aims to format yourself for the momental witness of death. Beyond that, the colorful mastery of surgery masks and twinkles through the Eye of Horus.

Horus Eye watch out

Going in line with this consideration, the art of surgery represents a very specific form of telling the myth of mankind. Using its characteristic language, surgery speaks about various aspects of human myth, including realities and the truth. Realities are revealed during the take of the patient history (his or her story), the diagnostic and surgical procedures. Most importantly, death represents one of the major outcome measures of clinical science (i.e., Kaplan–Meier estimate). This fact sheds light on the common essence of surgery, medical science, and the other forms of telling the myth of mankind.

Statistically, the myth of mankind equals the $\text{sum} \pm \text{mean}$ of all individual *momentous perceptions* (i.e., mood, temper, etc.) obtained by the members of a given population and has been the main focus of all records since the invention of scripture. One of the oldest scriptures of mankind is summarized within the ancient Pyramid texts (2500 B.C.). Within these texts, the Horus Eye mirrors one of the major and most important ideas. In addition to helping the dead king to regain sight, wisdom, and cosmic knowledge for his or her journey through the afterworld (universe), the Horus Eye masters the idea that being, thinking, reasoning, and the *perception of a moment* are the same. This idea was again taken up around 500 B.C. by the Greek philosopher (=surgeon of words) Parmenides, who, within his educational poem, came up with the understanding that thinking and being are the same. As such, being equals the perception of a moment. Remembrance creates the chain of memories in the form of stories, tales, poetry, novels, and history.

*Novelty not gave the wave,
but the twinkle motion slave.*

As such, history is another form of telling the myth of mankind. Taken together, the Horus Eye symbolizes the very essence of the twinkle of the eye: the sameness of thinking and being, the sameness of space-time quanta (large or small) and perception. In addition, the Horus Eye symbolizes the truth, which recalls that we are finite and have to die. Based on the ground of this essential atmosphere arises the power of art,

culture, and sciences (logos, ethos, physics), coloring the mythos of man. Within ancient mythologies, gods mirror the condensations of space-time energies (stars, planets, zodiac constellations, cosmic phenomena), the manifestations of human character (greed, hate, hunger, humility, gratitude) and ideas (cosmic consciousness, reason, will for power).

Conclusions

Taken together, death matters within the poly-semiotic field of surgery and medicine. Most importantly, oncology developed as a *science-driven blessing* for mankind and significantly contributes to save lives. Remains to be questioned, in as much surgeons should allow themselves to think about her or his individual finiteness, and in as much such a reasoning may influence your actions and decisions as a surgeon, physician? Here our reasoning takes us to the place where man models, designs, and stages both cosmic knowledge and afterworld wisdom: the sepulture (burial plot). Part II will come in the next issue and describe how the Horus Eye learnt to run, twinkle, and shine, and what happens if the origin forgets about its origin.

Question: what is now?

Answer: *grains of emotion, quanta of temper, moments of mood, and orders of atmosphere.*

Reason: *who feels it knows it.*

Consequence: *being and knowing (searching) is the same (Parmenides).*

Outlook: *We are full of exciting, fascinating, highly motivating possibilities!*

Stay tuned, let your sun shine, and enjoy your day.

Acknowledgements The author thanks that humility and gratitude haven chosen his mind for transient homes to support his search. In addition, the author thanks his family (parents Friedhild and Ewald, sister Senta et al., wife Tina et al.), friends, editors, reviewers, authors, Springer Vienna for motivation and support. Finally, the author thanks those who find their space-time to share the ideas depicted in the editorial.

Conflict of interest M. Riegler declares that he has no competing interests.