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Since the starting of time, people have been trying to come up with a suitable explanation for the creation of life and other unexplainable and complicated things in the world. The most common way adopted by man to explain these phenomena is to hold a god responsible for it. This is where the birth of religion and myth starts. The Norse and The Greeks were the two major groups many centuries ago, which used myths and religion as an explanation for anything and everything they could not fathom. It has been noted that the myth of these groups is pretty much similar but reasonably different. In this essay, we would attempt to differentiate Greek gods from the Norse Gods.

First of all, the characters in the Greek and the Norse mythology come from completely different regions and life styles. The Norse was based in the Northern countries which were a lot different socially, geographically, culturally and traditionally from the Greeks, which at that time was considered as a perfect and greatest country. The Norse had difficult times, since their temperature range was quite wide and fluctuant. There was extreme drop in temperature during winters and during summers, the temperature rose beyond relief. As a result, people were distressed and the barley was light. The seas were also not safe and there were strong winds and frequent storms which brought mayhem to people. On the other hand, Greeks lived quite a peaceful and comfortable life. They didn't suffer much temperature changes and the water was calm all the way. The change in the climate and living conditions thus has a huge role in shaping the myths of both these regions.

Presumably, accounting to this reason, the Greek gods are happy and joyful,

which is a sharp contrast to the dark and gloomy nature of Norse gods. The climatic conditions can be held as one reason for it, but it is greatly reflected in the adventures and various stories of gods. The Greek mythology sees many love stories like that of Venus and Adonis, Psyche and Cupid and story of Proserpina, Ceres and Pluto. These stories are playful, light hearted and romantic. They often don't end up in a pretty way, but as compared to the Norse stories of survival and fights, these are a sharp contrast. The Norse myths are greatly based in the war grounds, and tell tales of battle hardship and struggle, usually ending in death. For example, the story of Death of Blader and stories of Beowulf and Siegfried.

Both the Greek and The Norse mythology give importance to the idea of fate and link their importance to their lives. Even now, the Greeks use the word Fate for Fates and Norse god of faith is Norns. Both the groups, Norse and Greeks have 3 of these gods who were females and served the same purpose. One god starts the string of life, the other one lengthens it and decides as to what should happen to the person and third one cuts it off and ends the life. In simple words, one god sets the past, other takes care of the present and third, the future.

These gods were also considered to be superior to the other gods even though the three of them fall in a different realm than the other gods. This clearly shows how the idea of fate was so important to the Greeks and the Northern people. It is also very evident from this fact that both the groups of people used to hold their fate responsible for the turn of event which took place in their lives and there was a little they could actually do about it. The story behind the creation of the two mythologies also seems to be

slightly related. The Northern believed that the world was once an entirely frozen place until the birth of Ymir. Ymir was the one of the first giants to be born in the world, who was later killed by his own grand children. On the other hand, Greeks believe that this world was formed out of grand chaos. Out of this chaos, Gaea (Earth) and the Uranus (Heaven) were created to help people. Thus it can be drawn from both the stories that the world and other creation of gods were just a struggle and not a good place to live, until the superior gods arrived. The idea is to demand honour for these gods from their people.

In the stories of each mythology, the god had to rise up and fight for power and position with the current ruling god. In the Greek mythology, Uranus was killed by Cronos, who was later killed by Zeus to acclaim the throne.

Similarly, in the Norse Mythology, the giant, Ymir who was considered as the creator of earth and heaven was killed by Odin. The rulers in both the stories were brave, strong and powerful since they had to overthrow their predecessors and ruling gods in order to claim their position. Even among the other gods, there was no one who possessed the power which Zeus and Odin held.

Another point lies in the basic ideas of their mythology. The basic idea of the kind of man their ruler was, was very similar. Each of the mythology proposed that there is only one ruler of the men and gods that is Zeus and Odin respectively. Both of them had one wife (Hera and Frigg) who held a tad less powers than their husbands but more power as compared to the other gods. Each of the goddesses had a certain realm, for instance they were god of love, war, seas and death or the underworld. If you look at the other

myths, this probably might not seem like a big deal but there is only one creator or god in the Greek mythology, whereas there is a different god for every possible realm in the Norse mythology. Another point which can be concluded here is, these gods used to check by challenging the powers of Zeus and Odin, who in turn also used to check the power of these gods. The concept of heaven exists in both the mythologies, but their ideologies are completely different. The Norse heaven is Asgard which is a sad and gloomy place with no joy or bliss; just an impending sense of doom. Along with Asgard, there is also a continuous threat of an inevitable and entire destruction. The gods inhabiting Asgard know that a day will arrive when the place would be entirely inebriated. The heaven, as painted by the Greek is a stark contrast to this concept. Mount Olympus is a joyful and merry place where carefree celebration takes place. The gods there, prefer to spend their time by drinking ambrosia and toy with the various forces in nature. In this place, every action brings joy and delight to the people and doesn't necessarily intend towards the benefit of people. A thought of devastation or any sense of doom never crosses their mind, since Mount Olympus is considered as an undefeated and eternal structure which can never be brought down.

Apart from their heaven, the character of their gods also varies greatly. The Greeks gods are considered as immortal and indestructible. The Norse gods, on the other hand, know that someday they would be defeated and annihilated by some evil force. The Greek gods are optimistic and are assured of their victory in every battle, but they cannot be considered heroic just for this reason. Every person in Mount Olympia is invincible and

immortal. Thus, they enter the battle with no fear. This also work in disadvantage for them, since they cannot experience the adrenaline rush while facing danger and the exhilaration associated with overcoming odds. In contrast with this, the Norse gods are used to this kind of behaviour since they know that one day they would be defeated. It has been assumed that a day will come when the good and evil would fight a final battle, and the evil would succeed over Norse gods. But the Gods do not surrender so easily. Instead, they put a strong face and fight with all their strength till their end. The Norse gods are like the heroes who are destined for doom, but do not fear the situation. The Norse heroes face disaster while knowing that they cannot survive through with their heroic deeds. The Norse heroine, Signy, also dies along with her enemy after avenging for the death of her family. This death is heroic and seen as a triumph for avenging the wrong done to her.

However, the major difference between the two mythologies can be found if we compare the personalities of Odin and Zeus. The Greek god, Zeus is the Lord of Sky and also the ruler of all other gods. He is powerful and a fear inducing personality, but at the same time he is also a capital figure of fun. He indulges in affairs with mortal women and falls in trouble for the betterment of mankind. Odin could not be more different than Zeus! Odin is solemn, strange and detached, which is probably because of his constant struggle with impending doom. Odin prefers to be alone and seeks knowledge, mainly through physical traits.

The bottom line is, the drift between the Greek and Norse mythology is quite wide. The Norse mythology portrays despair, desolation and sacrifice, this

painting a dark and murky picture of the Norse culture. Greek Mythology sports remarkable heroism, which tells tales of victories of good over evil, adventure, love and a carefree life. Different as they are, the Norse and Greek mythology is the base of the culture followed by modern world.

References:

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