

# The importance of greek mythology

People



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Today, the ancient Greek myths still fascinate readers throughout the world. There are thousands of books written about the importance of Greek mythology in the formation of modern-time societies. There are hundreds of movies created about the adventures of Greek heroes. Apparently, the events, creatures, and people described in the ancient Greek myths were not real; however, their mythical nature does not undermine the importance of Greek mythology in defining the world of fantasies and in everyday life of people today.

Rose argues that myths were the tales which meant simply ' words' (1).

It indicates that the purpose of the myths was to create the fantastic presentation of the life of ancient Greeks. Furthermore, Rose suggests that " full as they are of impossible events, it needs no argument to prove that they differ widely from Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War, or Hippokrates' discussions of the effects of diet on a patient" (1). Indeed, Greek myths had little in common with the true history of the Greek people; nevertheless, those myths remain an important part of ancient Greek history as well as today's humankind.

To understand the importance of Greek mythology for modern people, it is important to take a look at the allegorical meaning of the tales. Rose suggests that Greek myths were allegories which concealed deep meaning and talked about the wisdom of the rules, the courage of ordinary people, and the eternal quest of humans to become equal to gods. Indeed, the myths convey values and cultural beliefs that have helped shape the thoughts of people all around the world. Presently, the ancient heroes such

as Hercules and Achilles are still referred to as the ideal individuals by millions of people.

Children grow up watching movies and television shows about action packed adventures of ancient Greek heroes. Of course, there are many heroes of the modern type; nevertheless, none of the modern heroes are able to compete with the ancient Greeks in this regard. Today, children often dream about becoming as amazingly strong as Superman, and yet many more children are forever fascinated with the seemingly never ending courage of Hercules and are immensely impressed with his vast adventures. Why do we need to study Greek mythology?

From one side, Greek students need to know about their cultural heritage. From another side, the study of Greek mythology is included in almost every educational curricular, from elementary to college level for the detailed part it plays in our past, present, and future. It thoroughly shows that Greek mythology has an essential role for not only the Greeks but for the rest of humankind. By studying the myths of ancient Greeks, we have a great opportunity to define our own place in the history.

Even though we realize that Greek heroes and all of those incredible creatures they have to fight with were probably not real, we tend to believe in the possible existence of superpowers and supernatural things. Thus, Greek myths give us a ground to believe in things we are not likely to ever have the chance to experience. In addition, special attention should be paid to the placement of gods in ancient Greek mythology. Unlike the other mythological heritage of different countries, the ancient Greeks attributed

great importance to their gods, their ultimate powers, and their ability to significantly shape the lives of mortal.

In Greek mythology, on the other hand, gods were definitely considered superior to mortals, but their superiority did not actually undermine the greatness of its people. Greeks embedded strong messages into their myths by arguing that human beings were able to become equal to gods if they were not afraid to face extremely dangerous challenges, if they were absolutely honorable in their actions, and if they lived actual heroic lives. Thus, Greek myths give modern mankind a baseline foundation to maintain eternal values of heroism.

We are infinitely inspired with the charitable deeds of Greek heroes, we remain fascinated with their life history, and we stay impressed with their seemingly endless courage in challenging the superiority of the gods. Moreover, the importance of Greek myths is not limited to just their cultural elements. In particular, the Greeks created a detailed account of the universe, the way it was created; they were the first to set the basic foundation for many sciences such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and astrology (Hard and Rose 22).

Today, the scientists may often be skeptical about getting ideas for their scientific researchers from Greek mythology; nevertheless, it cannot be denied that it was through those myths that many scientists started to question the validity of previous views on the world and universe. For example, the ancient myths include creatures with flying abilities, people able to live much longer lives, and gods able to guide destiny of mankind.

The myths about creatures with flying abilities encouraged engineers to consider possible opportunities for humans to rise into the air.

Thus, the first airplanes and helicopters were designed. The ability of people to live longer lives led to the significant progress in medicine and the healthcare field. Thus, today people do have longer and healthier lives. Furthermore, the discussions on powerful gods and their ability to share the destiny of each and every individual led to the philosophical and religious debates on the place of humans in universe and their powers. Thus, today we have a science of philosophy which helps every person find the answer to the eternal questions on life and death, fate and choice, etc.

Of course, all of these advances could be achieved without the ancient Greek mythology; however, it cannot be denied that Greek myths did contribute to the progress in sciences, philosophy, healthcare, and even engineering. Graf and Marier remark, “ stories such as those of Orpheus, Oedipus, and Helen of Troy are generally recognized as myths – stories that belong to the cultural heritage of the West but that may have analogues in the mythical corpora of the Egyptians, Teutons, Indians, or Bushmen” (1).

Therefore, myths play important role in cultures of all nations and civilizations. Today, children are inspired with heroes who have little resemblance to the ancient Greeks; nevertheless, many of the traits of the modern heroes have much in common with the ancient Greek mythical heroes. For example, Superman is very similar to Hercules as both were humans with superpowers and devoted to their lives to making the world a better place to live. The ancient Greek myths set the foundation for the moral and ethical development of the humankind.

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Without the Greek tales and fascinating myths, we would have poorer understanding of such virtues as courage and honor, wisdom and sacrifice, braveness and readiness to face the problem. It is through ancient Greek myths that we are able to define ourselves as good or bad. Even though the Greek mythology is based on fantasies, it cannot be denied that the stories convey important moral and ethical values. It is necessary to refer to the historical value of Greek myths. From one side, it is recognized that ancient Greek mythology has little to do with the real account of historical events.

From the other side, Nilsson argues that many of the Greek myths provide precise details about the life of ancient Greeks, their rules, and culture (5-6). The archeological findings of the 20th century support the validity of many Greek myths. Moreover, the Greece has numerous monuments left from ancient times for the modern visitors to attend. Without knowing our history, we are not able to understand our present, and we are incapable of judging our future. Thus, the Greek mythology helps modern mankind understand the past, present, and future better.

“ Does human society evolve? Are its various features and aspects organisms like man himself that are born and grow till they are what they see today? ” (Dowden 57). Dowden asks these two questions to guide the discussion on the importance of Greek mythology in lives of modern mankind. Greek mythology is not bottomless and has its origin, meaning, and consequences. Indeed, Greek myths are fantasies; however, those fantasies are closely related to the modern societies as they continue to shape the way we live, think, behave, and believe.

Without the stories about heroic Greeks and their adventures and without the accounts on their courage and superpowers, the modern mankind would be deprived of many moral and ethical values. In conclusion, the role and importance of the Greek mythology for modern mankind is multifaceted and far-reaching. In addition to the cultural heritage the Greek myths represent, the stories written by ancient Greek writers give us an opportunity to learn more about the cultures of ancient civilizations.

Moreover, the Greek myths help modern people remember about their virtues, about the value of honor and courage, and about equality between mortals and gods. The Greek myths are not only interesting to read, they are also educational in their context. Each story teaches readers a good lesson. Every character in myths has his or her own role to play. Today, people are eager to read the books and watch the movies about the lives of ancient Greeks because the mythology continues playing an important role in our lives.

In addition to giving us a chance to dive into the fantastic world of unknown creatures and powerful gods, the Greek mythology helps us remember about our history in order to understand our present. Works Cited Dowden, Ken. The uses of Greek mythology. Routledge, 1992 Graf, Fritz and Thomas Marier. Greek mythology: an introduction. JHU Press, 1996 Hard, Robin and Herbert Rose. The Routledge handbook of Greek mythology: based on H. J. Rose's " Handbook of Greek mythology". Routledge, 2004. Nilsson, Martin. The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology. Forgotten Books, 2007 Rose, Herbert. A Handbook of Greek Mythology. Routledge, 1991