

Being a family in greek and roman mythological period



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Infanticide: An Ethical or Unethical Perspective The Greek and Roman mythology focus on the importance of relationships. To say that their views on family tend towards loyalty may be odd for the uninformed reader, but in actuality, although in many of the myths members of the family kill one another, the ones who show loyalty are the ones who gain respect and admiration. However, the view on loyalty are made complex by internal family conflicts. For example, Antigone, in order to bury her brother, chooses to go against Creon's law. She prefers to show loyalty for her brother despite the risk of facing death. Loyalty is definitely a positive aspect in these myths' view on family relationships. What is negative is the complexity brought about by fights within the family. This is where the rightfulness of the loyalty shown is tested (Thury and Devinney 56-7). On a deeper perspective, Jung and Freud provide extensive, reflective, and philosophical interpretations of mythology. According to Jung, myths illustrate the ongoing psychic biases of a society. They also contain symbols or images upon which the society has come to perch. Some examples of these archetypes are wise old men (which can be referred to how families see their elderly members), the great earth mother (denotes the typical women's role of giving birth, etc.), and powerful male sky-god (demonstrates how males are seen in the society). Jung also describes the Electra complex that shows the first sexual feelings of a daughter is towards the father, thus developing hatred and jealousy towards the mother. Freud has a counterpart theory of this called the Oedipus complex that says the first sexual feelings of a male child is directed towards his mother, which results also in hatred and jealousy directed towards the rival --- the father (Bowlby 13-5). These theories are demonstrated in several myths. For example, in "Theogony," Hesiod demonstrates biases between

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father-son conflicts (Bowlby 32), as well as male-females one within the family. It is possible that Hesiod manipulates some parts of some myths to give a positive aspect to the male power, while giving a negative connotation to the female power, which are mostly focused on birth and death (Thury and Devinney 112). Another example, his time demonstrating what is seen as male supremacy over females (Angier 26) is Perseus beheading Medusa. Since Medusa's power can cause castration or impotence to men, Perseus' act gives him back his power over his manhood and at the same time making certain the feminine wiles are silenced (Thury and Devinney 109). Another case is that of Zeus, Metis, and Hera. Zeus is known to be attractive to all women, save for his first wife Metis. Then he decides to marry Hera, his sister. After wooing Hera for several hundred years, then eventually seducing her into marrying him, he decides to go after mortal women, fooling Hera with the logic that he is doing it for the sake of providing hero children to humankind. Despite her anger, Hera is unable to make Zeus pay for his actions due to his immense power. These stories alone speak a lot regarding how men and women are viewed in the society (Mealey 284). One has to understand that the way society views males and females reflects how they treat each other within the family (Angier 27). This is so true when one links Perseus and Zeus stories together. Zeus jealousy over his prophesied son is also so obvious when he swallowed Metis out of fear that this son will overtake his throne. It is therefore obvious that the mythology is highly patriarchal (Mealy 284). This is opposed in Medusa's case, yet Perseus stops her reign out of fear that the males will be subject to female power. Even the one who is able to decide who falls in love with who is a male, Cupid. Works Cited Angier, N. " The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory: Why an Invented Past <https://assignbuster.com/being-a-family-in-greek-and-roman-mythological-period/>

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