



IDX G9 English H+

Study Guide Issue #1

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### **Mythology**

- not factual truths
- explain natural phenomena, teach, but the main purpose is to entertain.
- Four Primary Functions of Myths (Joseph Campbell)
  - Mystical/Metaphysical: inspiring a sense of awe for the universe/existence itself (e.g., the creation of the world by a divine being)
  - Cosmological: explaining how the world/universe functions (e.g., the origin of rain)
  - Sociological: supporting and validating a certain social order (e.g., the divine right of the monarchy)
  - Psychological/Pedagogical: guiding each individual through life/involving universal themes such as love, revenge, knowledge, etc. (e.g., the importance of perseverance)

### **Common Archetypes and Symbols in Literature**

- **Archetype:** a typical and/or familiar character, relationship, action, or situation that represents universal aspects of human nature.
- **Situational Archetypes:** Common situations/storylines stories follow; also reflected in Greek myths
  - The Quest:
    - Definition: The hero sets out on a journey to accomplish a goal, often facing trials along the way
    - Example: Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece
  - The Task:
    - Definition: The hero must perform a nearly impossible deed to prove worthiness or to achieve something
    - Example: Hercules completing the Twelve Labors
  - The Initiation
    - Definition: The hero undergoes a rite of passage, transforming from innocence to experience or immaturity to responsibility
    - Example: Telemachus in *The Odyssey* maturing into manhood
  - The Journey
    - Definition: The hero travels in search of truth or knowledge, often descending into a “hell” and emerging transformed
    - Example: Odysseus's long voyage home after the Trojan War
  - The Fall
    - Definition: A descent from a higher to a lower state of being (possibly involving moral imperfection, and/or loss of innocence)
    - Example: Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden
  - Death and Rebirth
    - Definition: A cycle reflecting nature and life—something dies and is reborn, symbolizing renewal or hope
    - Example: Persephone's yearly descent and return, representing the seasons
  - The Battle Between Good and Evil
    - Definition: A clear struggle between opposing forces, with good usually prevailing
    - Example: Zeus overthrowing the Titans
  - The Unhealable Wound

- Definition: A physical or psychological wound that cannot fully heal and defines the character's struggles
  - Example: Prometheus eternally punished by the eagle eating his liver
- The Ritual:
  - Definition: Ceremonies that mark a character's rite of passage, bonding, or social status
  - Example: Baptism as the entrance into Christianity
- The Flood:
  - Definition: A great flood or disaster wipes out civilization as punishment or renewal
  - Example: The flooding in the Old Testament
- **Symbolic Archetypes: Common symbols in pop culture/Greek myths**
  - Light vs. Darkness
    - Significance: good vs. evil
    - Example: Zeus's lightning vs. the darkness of the Titans
  - Water
    - Significance: purification, rebirth, life
    - Example: the River Styx
  - Fire
    - Significance: destruction, passion, knowledge, life
    - Example: Prometheus stealing fire for humanity and enlightening them
  - Garden
    - Significance: innocence, paradise, harmony
    - Example: The Garden of Eden
  - Wilderness
    - Significance: chaos, danger, the unknown
    - Example: The Labyrinth built for the Minotaur
  - Heaven vs. Hell
    - Significance: divine aspirations vs. temptation or evil
    - Example: Mount Olympus vs. Hades in the underworld
  - Crossroads
    - Significance: decision, choice, turning point
    - Example: Neo choosing the red or blue pill in *The Matrix*
  - Tower

- Significance: isolation, pride, overreaching ambition
  - Example: The Tower of Babel echoes human pride
- Seasons
  - Significance: spring (rebirth), summer (youth), autumn (decline), winter (death)
  - Example: Persephone's descent and return mark the cycle of seasons
- **Character Archetypes: Common types of characters in pop culture/Greek mythology**
  - Hero
    - Definition: The main character who faces trials and grows
    - Example: Perseus
  - Mentor
    - Definition: a character who guides or teaches the hero
    - Example: Chiron, the centaur, training Achilles
  - Shadow
    - Definition: the antagonist or darker side of the hero
    - Example: Voldemort
  - Damsel in Distress
    - Definition: a vulnerable female character who needs rescuing
    - Example: Andromeda, saved by Perseus from the fate of being sacrificed to Poseidon
  - Temptress
    - Definition: a female character who uses beauty or charm to lead the hero astray
    - Example: The Sirens
  - Loyal Retainers/Sidekicks
    - Definition: loyal companions who support the hero and often are of lower status than the hero
    - Example: Sam to Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings*
  - Trickster
    - Definition: a mischievous, often clever character who disrupts order
    - Example: The snake who tricks Eve into consuming the fruit of knowledge
  - Outcast
    - Definition: a wise or special character rejected by society
    - Example: Shrek in *Shrek*
  - Mother Figure
    - Definition: a female character offering nurturing, care, or protection

- Example: Rhea, Zeus's mother, protected him from being swallowed by his father and thus helped him become the king of the gods.
- Scapegoat
  - Definition: a character blamed for problems or sacrificed for others
  - Example: Pandora for the presence of evil

## Myth Summaries & Analysis

- **The Story of Prometheus and Pandora's Box by James Baldwin**

- Summary: Prometheus, a Titan, disobeys Jupiter (another name for Zeus) by giving fire to humans, helping them build civilization. To punish mankind, Jupiter creates Pandora, a woman gifted with beauty and wit, and sends her to Prometheus's brother Epimetheus. Out of curiosity, Pandora opens a sealed jar, releasing suffering, sickness, and death into the world. She shuts it just in time to keep one thing inside—Foreboding—preventing humans from despairing at the troubles they would encounter in later life.
- Simple Analysis:
  - Jupiter: a tyrant figure; the corruption of power
  - Pandora: temptress/beauty as evil archetype; serves to validate patriarchal society
  - Promethean Gift: innovation with unintended consequences (Pandora's Box)

- **Psyche and Eros**

- Summary: Psyche, a mortal woman of extraordinary beauty, draws the jealousy of Venus (Aphrodite), who sends her son Eros (Cupid) to make Psyche fall in love with a monster. Instead, Eros falls in love with her himself and secretly becomes her husband, visiting only at night and forbidding her to look at him. Persuaded by her jealous sisters, Psyche lights a lamp to see him, breaking his trust and causing Eros to flee. To win him back, Psyche undergoes a series of impossible tasks set by Venus, including sorting seeds, fetching golden wool, and descending into the underworld to retrieve makeup. With divine help, Psyche succeeds in her first two trials, only to fail at the third out of curiosity. Eros rescues her, and Zeus ultimately grants her immortality so that she and Eros can be united forever.
- Simple Analysis
  - Venus embodies envy and the destructive power of jealousy.

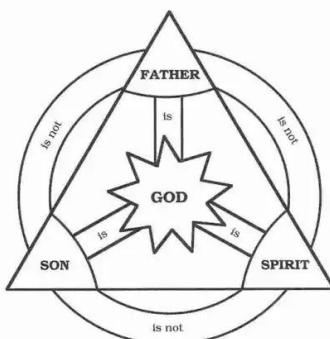
- Relationships require faith; once broken, it is difficult to repair. (Truth is essential).
  - True love often requires trials, sacrifice, and perseverance.
  - Psyche's Journey symbolizes the soul's growth through hardship, showing how struggle leads to maturity and eternal reward.
  - Psyche: damsel in distress
- **Orpheus and Eurydice**
  - Summary: Orpheus, the greatest musician, marries Eurydice, but she soon dies from a snake bite. Grief-stricken, Orpheus travels to the underworld, where his music moves Hades and Persephone to allow Eurydice to return with him—on the condition that he must not look back until they reach the upper world. Just before they arrive, Orpheus, overcome with doubt and longing, turns back too soon, causing Eurydice to vanish forever. He wanders the earth in sorrow until he is eventually killed, and his soul is reunited with Eurydice in the afterlife.
  - Simple Analysis
    - Orpheus symbolizes the power of art and music to move even the gods.
    - Doubt can destroy love and lead to loss. (Orpheus doubted Eurydice was following her)
    - Even the greatest heroes can fall to temptation and fear.
    - The story reflects the inevitability of death and the permanence of separation, but also suggests reunion beyond mortal life, that lovers would find each other no matter what.
    - Eurydice: voicelessness and lack of agency in women

## The Portrayal of Women in Greek Mythology

- Women: beauty and influence, but shaped by male authority/punishment
- Goddesses: strength/wisdom, but serve patriarchal order
- Mortal women: vulnerable to gods, highlights the imbalance between human fragility and divine power
- Women as scapegoats for humanity's suffering (e.g., Pandora for hardship/death, Helen of Troy for war)
- Women as monsters: fear of women's destructive potential

## Christianity

- Christianity: a monotheistic religion centered on the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, whom believers affirm as the Son of God and the Messiah (Christ) whose coming was prophesied in the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament).
- Theology: the study of the nature of God and religious beliefs
  - Theologian: a person who engages in theology
- Holy Trinity
  - the Christian doctrine that there is one God who exists eternally in 3 distinct, co-equal, and co-eternal persons



- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit
- God exists in one for an essence or being, while three in person.
- Not a belief in three gods/the belief that God manifests himself in three different modes at different times
- It is the concept of one God, but in three persons.

- **God**

- Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Omnidbenevolent

Characteristic	Explanation
Omnipotent	All powerful: unlimited, infinite, and supreme power
Omnipresent	All present/places: present everywhere at the same time
Omniscient	All knowing: possesses all knowledge
Omnidbenevolent	All good: perfectly good, morally excellent, and infinitely loving

- **Satan**

- Hebrew word meaning “accuser” or “adversary”.
  - Hebrew Bible (Old Testament):
  - A job, not a name
  - Works for God to test the righteousness of humans (e.g., in the Book of Job)

- Christian Theology: fallen angel (Lucifer) who rebelled against God out of pride
  - Inferno by Dante: details of his journey to hell with Virgil
- **Theodicy**
    - The vindication of God
    - Framework wherein God's existence is also plausible, along with the existence of evil
    - Origins: Epicurus, Greek materialist philosopher/first atheist philosopher in the West, challenged God's existence
    - Common solution: Evil is the consequence of free will, which must exist for the freedom of choosing good and love/God's plan is too difficult to comprehend
- **The Bible**
    - The Old Testament: the Jewish Bible/the story of creation/the history of the Jewish people/promises the coming of the Messiah
    - The New Testament: the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus/the beginnings of the holy churches
    - Quoting from the Bible
      - John 3:16 is the proper citation for:
      - Book of John, Chapter 3, Verse 16
- **Jesus Christ**
    - Nativity: the birth of Jesus
    - Born in Bethlehem (In current-day Palestine)
    - Full name: Yeshua ben Yosef, or Jesus of Nazarene
    - He was visited by 3 wise men (known as Magi, often regarded as astrologers or priests from the East, who followed a star to visit the infant Jesus), presenting him with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These three objects symbolized kingship, divinity, and sacrificial death.
    - He taught that all men were alike in the eyes of God.
    - Jesus's Role:
      - Healer: gave food/cured the sick (blindness and leprosy)
      - Fighter: radical, political thinker (found money lenders occupying a temple and drove them out with a whip)
    - Baptism and Fasting:
      - Baptized by friend John
      - 40 days of fasting on a mountaintop
      - In the desert, thrice tempted by the devil (note, this is not Satan)

- Last Supper and Betrayal:
  - Gave apostles bread and wine
  - Trans-substantiation: changing his body and blood to bread and wine
  - Judas betrayed Jesus to local religious officials for money
- Crucifixion and Resurrection
- Symbolic significance:
  - The Christ figure: often alluded to in literary texts
  - Jesus as a martyr

## Thesis Writing

- **Template:**
  - In [Text Name], [Author Name] utilizes [literary element] in order to [answer to prompt], ultimately illustrating that [thematic statement/universal idea].