Mythology is much more than a collection of stories we read for our own personal entertainment or a simple term we take for granted; to many cultures, it was the basis of their lives, the roots of ours, and became on what they solely depended on everyday. Myths were created before science as a type of folktale that tells what a culture believed in from occurrences happening all around them. Myths from different cultures are usually related in a pattern of similar archetypes which specifically are "characters, images, stories and themes that symbolically embody universal meanings and basic human experiences across time and cultures" (notes). These myths provide us comfort and security from our changing world, whether it gives reason to thank for, blame on or just be. Moral lessons are commonly found in myths to teach us about our flaws and our nature as human beings. Another characteristic delved indirectly into myths are cultural values which are typically shown throughout a person to be modeled after as an example, such as a hero or a rewarded character. In addition, natural phenomena including the seasons and floods in the past were unexplained without myths as ancient cultures thought there had to be reason for everything and every occurrence. The functions of mythology include the moral lessons, cultural values and natural phenomena are all demonstrated in multiple archetypes from the collection of myths Man the Mythmaker by W. T. Jewkes as well as several other sources.

Myths are types of stories relating to humanity which teaches us all types of moral lessons about our behavior and life through reward and punishment, where one is rewarded for good deeds and punished for evil or through success and failure which can show how much one can accomplish with hard work and how one can fail from the smallest misstep and lose all at stake. In the Greek myth "Athene and Arachne," Arachne is an admired mortal girl from her excellence at spinning and weaving and is showered with so many compliments that she dares to challenge Athene, the jealous goddess who invented weaving. When Arachne does end up having the better tapestry although it depicts the unruly characteristic of the gods, Athene is furious enough for Arachne to want to hang herself but Athene spares Arachne although with a consequence as she says, " 'You may go on living, but just keep mindful of what it is to defy the gods, you shall hang the rest of your days, you and the rest of your offspring' " (Jewkes 125). Arachne was punished for her arrogance and hubris, cursed to weave forever as a spider as a reminder of her defiance and disrespect to the gods as she never thanked Athene for the invention of weaving itself and she had a large ego she could not control. Arachne's punishment from Athene teaches readers of this myth that there is no reason to why ever insult the gods and how we should be less self-indulgent and insolent as it can lead to consequences. Another myth but this time concerning success and failure is through the Greek myth "Orpheus" in which Orpheus' wife, Eurydice, was bitten by a serpent one day and sent to the Underworld. Orpheus, a son of Apollo was so desperate that he plays his lyre and uses his voice all the way down to the Underworld and no one dares to step in his way, and he convinces both Hades and Persephone to let Eurydice go back on one condition, which was to not look back at Eurydice as they ascended to the world of the living. Orpheus was just at the last stretch of his journey but "he looked behind him to make sure Eurydice was still with him and at that very moment, she was snatched back because he did not trust that she was there" (http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/webtexts/eurydice/eurydicemyth.html). Orpheus failed at bringing Eurydice back to life even when he was given the chance to bring her back, which no one living has ever been granted the opportunity. The moral of this myth teaches readers to not tempt fate and to have faith in what others say.

Mythology read in the modern world helps us to piece together more than how a culture once behaved but also by their traditions and values which can be shown by a hero or a rewarded character. The Ancient Greek's values are expressed in the myth "Theseus and the Minotaur" where every year tributes are sent from Athens to the labyrinth in Crete as an appeasement to the Minotaur and King Minos, but the protagonist Theseus, son of King Aegeus of Athens, volunteers to go and wishes to slay the Minotaur. Princess Ariadne of Crete assists Theseus with a ball of thread to help him navigate on his way back, and when Theseus enters the labyrinth he fetches "a sword stroke at him with all his force, he hit him [the Minotaur] fair upon the neck, and made his bull head skip six yards from his human body"(http://ancienthistory.about.com/od/theseus/a/102110-Theseus-And-The-Minotaur\_2.htm). Theseus is the very first volunteer to enter the labyrinth and has the determination to even though he does not have to as prince of Athens and becomes a hero to Athens from the sacrificing of tributes, earning kleos. This myth demonstrates the Greek cultural values of assistance where Ariadne helped out Theseus, courage where Theseus portrayed bravery and from stepping up, which is a trait not many will do from their own will. Also, values can be shown from a rewarded character which shows which traits a culture believes should be rewarded for. A myth explaining rewarded characters is from the Roman myth "Baucis and Philemon" who were a poor but happy couple who both aided Jupiter and Mercury when they came to test the purity of mankind. All of the houses slammed their doors on Jupiter and Mercury except for Baucis and Philemon who invited them in, with Jupiter rewarding them with their wish of " 'Let us be your priests, guarding this temple for you. . .let neither of us ever have to live alone. Grant that we may die together' " (Jewkes 182). Baucis and Philemon's reward of a wish reflects on their goodwill and hospitality they provided to the gods. The characters' reward indicates the Ancient Romans valued humbleness, piousness and Xenia.

One last function of mythology comes from natural phenomena, which are the organic occurrences of life reasoned by myths from things ranging from a flower to the changing seasons. In the Greek myth "Demeter and Persephone", Demeter the goddess of agriculture has a favorite daughter named Persephone who is kidnapped by Hades, god of the Underworld. Demeter grieves Persephone's presence and although Persephone ate in the Underworld, which meant she could not come back to the world of the living, the gods eventually concluded to a compromise that "since she only ate half the pomegranate, she could live with Hades for that half of the year then she could come up to visit her mother, and the earth would bring forth flowers and fruits and grain once more, enough to keep men and beasts alive for the rest of the year" (Jewkes 74). Persephone would stay on Earth for half of the year which would bring happiness to her mother who would allow crops to grow for enough time for when Persephone had to stay in the Underworld where her mother would grieve her on earth and did not allow crops to grow. This myth explains why we have seasons as when Persephone was with her mother it was the summertime and when she was with Hades it meant it was winter. Finally, another natural phenomena explained elaborates on why we have plagues, disease but also hope. In the Greek myth "Pandora", Zeus figured punishing Prometheus was not enough and since Epimetheus, Prometheus' brother had a role in helping Prometheus steal fire for humans, Zeus created Pandora and presented her to Prometheus as his wife, but she was specifically given the virtue of curiosity. Zeus also presented Epimetheus a jar which was to never be opened, but one day Pandora could not contain her curiosity and "had let the Spites loose from the jar . . . Pandora had also released the one thing that would comfort men through ages of anxiety. This was Hope" (Jewkes 74). Pandora was meant to be a punishment to mankind and an appeasement to the gods for mortals receiving fire, purposefully engineered to eventually open the jar. The natural phenomena explained by this myth tells readers why we have these spirits of negativity such as strife, greed and madness but also of one that can sustain much more than all: hope.

All in all, there are many mythologies with a common thread of archetypes which functions as morals, examples of cultural values as well as an explanation for natural phenomena. Morals teach us about our lives and how we can lead to a better path, cultural values show us what a culture once valued and natural phenomena explain everyday occurrences in nature. Mythology not only played a vital role on the past but it also does so for today. Mythology can be used for entertainment, but is also a source of comfort, especially in a world that changes constantly and seems to be disconnected from another.

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