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**Western Misinterpretation of Mythology in US Cinematography.
Case Studies : African and Native American Mythologies.**

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my wonderful family and closest people...

To the most Amazing Parents a Person can ask for...

Thank you for raising me and helping me become the young woman I am today, I would not have done that. Dad, thank you for taking care of me as a child and teaching me to pursue my dreams ; thank you for listening to my ideas and providing me with many. Mom, thank you for being the amazing mother I had the honor to have as role model while growing up ; thank you for always listening to me, and filling me with your love when I felt down or lost. Thank you both for holding my hands while I was climbing the stairs of life, I will be forever grateful for having you in my life.

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Abstract

Many members of the society have already heard or have some knowledge about mythology, yet only a few know about the origin of the term or what it represents for several civilizations across the globe. This dissertation aims to provide a concrete definition of mythology and give an introduction to its different types ; it will also shed light on the purpose as well as the importance of mythology among society and for its members. Several works will be cited in this research to show the influence of mythology in different artistic activities, and how it is portrayed through those works. The work will point at the role of mythology in building a unique and rooted cultural identity, in addition to mentioning the ways it can be both valorized and preserved. The purpose of this dissertation is to explain the way mythology works, how it can be used or modified and the misconceptions that may occur if one has no previous knowledge about mythology. This research is set to highlight the presence of mythology in mankind's daily journey, as it is considered to be a primal source of knowledge.

Key words :

Mythology, Knowledge, Cinematography, Culture, History, Origins, Cultural Identity

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General Introduction

Mythology has always existed since the beginning of times, even at the time of pre-historical people ; many drawings found in caves affirmed the existence of mythology, even before mankind could speak fluent languages like it is the case in modern days. Mythology was introduced by many scholars, and researchers as a part of human nature ; the ability to imagin such tales is imbedded in the human brain before birth. One has to acknowledge the fact that mythology is not always the outcome of rationality or based on truth and coherency, it is rather the farfetched imagery chosen by people to simplify the unexplained. It is known to be the study revolving around people's religious and spiritual beliefs, but also as the gathering of such tales that explore various aspects of human's balance of logic, like the difference between good and evil or life and death.

Mythology was for centuries one of the most discussed topics. This ancient heritage can be defined as being false or unproved ideas, created by a certain group of people in order to provide an explanation for a current situation. Many theories were made to explain the origin of mythology, and what encouraged or forced ancient tribes to use mythology ; many theories suggested that myths resulted from people's fears or miraculous events that happened, or that those tales could have represented the incarnation of several deadly illnesses that raged in ancient times, and to which people did not have much knowledge about during that period ; the list of theories goes on and on, yet no proper definition or explanation was given to make sense of what purpose mythology served.

Different civilizations throughout history had a special mythology of their own. Although those communities had nothing in common, speaked different languages and had distinctly diverse cultures ; several similarities between them were claimed to have been found. According to researchers, mythologists and archeologists, numerous myths and ancient monuments origination from totally

different and unrelated civilizations, were found to be sharing many features with each other which backs up the claims of Sigmund Freud regarding the myths representing the secret desires of people, that are considered taboos ; as well as Carl Jung's theory pointing at myths resulting from the collective unconscious, and being a part of the human nature implanted in the brain just like the ability to recognize the difference between mother and father, or noticing the variety of personalities of people.

This work is set to answer and explore the following questions and ideas :

- What is mythology ?
- What is the purpose of mythology ?
- What led to the creation of mythology ?
- What importance does mythology hold in society ?
- What is the contribution of mythology to culture ?
- What is the contribution of mythology to history ?
- What is the contribution of mythology to religion ?
- What is the contribution of mythology to psychology ?
- What are some existing types of mythology ?
- Does mythology hold a part of truth or is it purely fictional ?
- What is the importance of mythology for tribal members ?
- How does mythology contribute in building a cultural identity ?
- Are all mythologies valued in the same way ?
- How can mythology be preserved ?
- How were mythologies depicted in movies ?
- How are civilizations diversified through mythology ?
- What does mythology represent ?
- What is mythology based upon ?

Chapter One

World Mythology and its Role

Introduction

This chapter will provide an introduction to mythology, as well as its contribution to modern society throughout different domains. Several myths and urban legends extracted from different mythologies across the world will be cited in this chapter with the aim of unravelling the meaning of mythology, and the reasons behind its existence. Mythology has existed for thousands of years and has been one of the most discussed topics related to culture, history, beliefs and customs of a certain group of people. It is known to be the reflection of ancient civilizations. Mythology has evolved throughout centuries to fit new generations and is still on its way of evolution, it is a vast world of imaginary tales narrated and left by ancestors, best defined as a supernatural version of the events that happened in a precise period of time.

1. Definition of Mythology

Mythology has played an important role in history because it is linked to simple questions, questions that the human mind has not been able to answer yet, questions such as : " Is there life after death ?", " Are we alone in the universe ?", " Does reincarnation exist ?". These questions have been asked for centuries yet no one was able to give them proper explanations or answers. It is due to this type of mysteries that the human mind started questioning reality

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and that is what led to the creation of supernatural stories too heavy in this world to hold, and those stories constitute the fragmentation of mythology.

The term myth was first used in John Lydgate's Troy Book in the fifteenth century and meant to introduce one or several myths. The term itself originated from the Latin word Mythos that is translated as story or tale, which means the story of the people. The word Mythology gained a larger meaning throughout the centuries as it does not only refer to collecting myths but also as to expose and study them.

Mythology can be best described as a study revolving around people's religious and spiritual beliefs, but also as the gathering of such tales that explore various aspects of human's balance of logic like the difference between good and evil or reality and fiction.

2. The Purpose of Mythology

The purpose of mythology, technically speaking, is to collect; put into light and study different myths related to culture, history and religion, but mythology was also set to put in order a world filled with chaos. Ancient tribes used mythology as an explanation to the birth of the human race, the beginning of times or how the world came to life. Now, one has to acknowledge the fact that mythology was not made to be rational or coherent, but rather to be the extraordinary incarnation of people's beliefs, fears and worries, the sanctuary of their problems and unanswered questions. (Encyclopaedia Mythica)

Although most of the myths that several cultures have shaped are either unbelievable or farfetched, some of them were either believed to be true, or holding a part of truth. For instance in ancient Greek Mythology, Cyclops combine two physical elements into one, a humanoid figure of massive stature like it was the case for Robert Pershing Wadlow surnamed the Alton Giant, or the Giant of Illinois ; an American man who reached 2. 72m high, the tallest man ever known in the history of the United States, and a physical malformation called Trisomy 18 Cyclopia that is a genetic disorder related to Chromosome

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18, a very rare yet existent physical feature in which the patient is born with one eye instead of two. (YouTube)

Mythology attempts to give a rather modified, and out of the ordinary description of the occurring events of a certain period of time, it explains the religious beliefs and provides reasons behind sacred religious rituals. It also digs into the unknown like Godly powers and creation as it is the case in Roman and Greek mythologies and works on the foundation of the natural and social orders of life, the natural order being how mother nature works and the social order meaning what kind of individual behaviour is acceptable in the society according to the beliefs of a certain group of people. (Encyclopaedia)

In other words the aim of mythology is to answer the unanswered and explain what cannot be unexplained, However explanations provided in such stories received a lot of criticism throughout the centuries due to the lack of rationality, yet sceptics might have looked at it the wrong way as it could have been a metaphorical interpretation of real facts.

3. Existing Types of Mythology

There are many types of mythology, each serving a particular purpose, some created in order to explain the beginning of life and how everything on earth came to life, others were set to clarify the notions of life and death. Mythology in general emerged as an interpretation of life events and mysteries, the goal behind its birth was to give an answer to the unknown, and was later on divided into different sections as cited below.

3.1. Animal Mythology

Animals throughout centuries have always been mentioned in worldwide mythologies as being supernatural beings that could talk or had special abilities. They were also venerated by different civilizations such as the Egyptians who venerated cats that represented the symbol of protection, or cows representing the Goddess Kamadhenu, and are sacred creatures in India

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for providing milk, fermented milk, melted butter, urine but also dung. These five elements are considered as the perfect combination for the cleansing of body and soul. There are countless myths across the globe that tell stories about different kinds of fantastical animals, some of them are. (YourDictionary)

- Chiron from Greek Mythology was a centaur, a mythical being half-man half-horse who was teaching all Greek heroes. He was the son of Cronos God of time, and father of all Greek Gods and was believed to have invented medicine.
- The Faun in Roman mythology was a chimera half-man half-goat creature mentioned in different tales in Ancient Rome.
- Coyote in the Native American mythology is another animal cited in numerous tales as being a trouble-maker with no sense of responsibility.
- Apep or Apophis a serpent like dragon who was a deity representing chaos and destruction for Ancient Egyptian Civilization.
- Ganesha, an elephant-headed God in India is one of the most famous and worshipped Gods in Hinduism. He is depicted as the God of beginnings, and praised for blessing the intellectuals, bankers as well as authors.
- The Minotaur was a beast from Greek Mythology that had the body of a man and the head of a bull. This creature came to life as Pasiphae, wife of Minos the ruler of Crete, fell in love with a white bull offered to Minos for sacrifice by Poseidon, god of the seas. Minos son of Zeus, god of the skies and thunder, kept the bull alive refusing to kill it; as a punishment for Minos, Poseidon made Pasiphae fall in love with the bull and gave birth to its child. The Minotaur was sent to the Labyrinth of Minos, and later on killed by the Athenian hero Theseus with the help of Ariadne, daughter of Minos and Pasiphae.
- The Kraken from Norse Mythology was described as a giant squid-like monster that lived in the depths of the seas, and would attack nearby boats scaring the fishermen and sailors.

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3.2. Creation Mythology

This section of Mythology is dedicated to myths talking about the creation of the world, the different gods mentioned in different civilizations and how everything started. Creation myths were not meant to be logical or realistic, but rather to provide explanations for a current situation that a certain civilization was living in and help them understand from where it all began. This type of Mythology can be found in different civilizations across the world but because they are many, a few examples will be provided to show the similarities and differences in how the world was created in some of these civilizations. (YourDictionary)

- Greeks believed there were many gods all born from one father Cronus, they were assumed to be ruling the world each with a precise mission; Poseidon would rule the seas, Zeus god of the skies, Hera goddess of earth, Hades ruler of the underworld and many more...all living on Olympus the highest mountain in Greece, and ruling the world from a far.
- The same story in Greek mythology is repeated in Roman mythology with different gods. Romans believed there was a god named Saturn who was the King of all gods and the ruler of the universe, like Cronos he was presumed to be the father of multiple gods and goddesses, there was a prophecy saying that he was going to be dethroned by one of his children therefore he started eating all of his children right after they were born, but one of them was saved by his mother Ops his name was Jupiter the Roman version of Zeus god of thunder and lightning. After he became fully grown, Jupiter decided to take revenge on his father and made him drink a special substance causing Saturn to throw up all the children he ate. At the end, he took his father's position and became the most powerful god of all, similar to Zeus.
- Sobek was a demon reptile with a crocodile head believed to be the god of crocodiles. This ancient Egyptian deity was believed to be the creator of the world after being born from the dark waters of Nun, oldest god in ancient Egyptian mythology whose name meant primeval waters, and represented the waters of chaos. He was presumed to have made the Nile River from his sweat. Sobek was considered " Lord of the

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Waters " offering protection and fertility to the land. However, he was not only a creator god but sometimes was also associated with chaos and destruction.

- One of the most powerful and worshiped deities in Hinduism was Gaṅgā, the goddess of water. She was ordered to come to earth by Brahma and in an attempt of revenge; she decided to make the earth vanish. To punish her Lord Shiva trapped her in his hair then brought her to earth and released her in small streams of water. The Ganga River is believed to be the only river flowing from all three worlds Heaven, Earth and Hell, and is sacred among Hindus for having holy powers such as the remission of sins but also bringing peace in the afterlife to the dead whose ashes are scattered in it.
- Midgard was the name for Earth in early Germanic cosmology. In the Norse mythology, Midgard was supposed to be the origin of mankind, created from the body of Aurgelmir, a giant who was the first being ever created. Aurgelmir was believed to have been killed by the gods, and Midgard was created from his body parts as the clouds were made out of his brain, his flesh became the land, his blood formed the oceans, his bones transformed in mountains, his teeth formed the cliffs and his hair was turned into trees.
- In Persian mythology, the world was believed to have been created by the god Ahura Mazda who had not been created and lived eternally. Ahura Mazda created the world in seven steps, an orb floating in the void became the sky, he then shed the waters in it and separated them with earth ; the orb which represented the sky rose up high above and underneath the earth. Ahura Mazda then planted vegetation on earth and gave it life, he then created the three primordial animals, the first bull, the first bovine and ox that would be the origin of all other animals that by their turn would feed on the vegetation and fertilize it.

3.3. Death and Underworld Mythology

Death was one of the most discussed topics in mythology, many myths related to death and to the underworld were told throughout history. Death in itself was feared among all members of different civilizations because for those people it meant nothing but darkness.

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Each mythology had a section dedicated only to an " Underworld " to which lost and tormented souls were meant to go after death, an afterlife of pain and sorrow according to certain beliefs, this Underworld in question was either described as good or evil and believed to be ruled by gods.

Deities of death were often depicted as evil spirits bringing chaos and destruction, but that was not always the case they were often seen as demons while on duty, some were indeed cruel and merciless while others were good sparing humans from atrocious torture, or indifferent to the matter and simply doing their job. Here are some of the death deities mentioned in mythology. (Ancient History Encyclopaedia)

- Thanatos was the god of death in Greek mythology, he was not mentioned much like the rest of the Greek gods yet he was the representation of death. Thanatos was believed to be gentle as he would go on collecting souls giving them a feeling of peacefulness and tranquillity making them welcoming death as a friend rather than an enemy. Despite his non-violent manners, Thanatos was known to be strict and unsparing when it came to accomplishing his mission as he believed death was not a negotiable pact.
- Cōātlīcue was the mother goddess in Aztec mythology; she was the mother of Huitzilopochtli, god of the sun and war, as well as the mother of Coyolxauhqui who later on organized an attack against her while pregnant with Huitzilopochtli. She was also believed to have given birth to the moon and the stars, and was represented as the goddess of life and death as she would give birth and consume every living being.
- Shinigami in Japanese religion were often mentioned, described as grotesque spirits bringing nothing else but darkness and evil. Versions of myths related to Shinigami are varied but none of those versions have been certified nor is the number of the existing Shinigami known. They were believed to be the gods of death as they would lead people to the desire of suicide, or would decide at what time people had to die in both ways. They would collect lives and usually in the most horrifying ways imaginable.

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- Chernobog in Slavic mythology whose name meant the " Black god " was the ruler of the Underworld and was one of the most scary and feared gods of all times, as he was believed to be evil to the core and brought only chaos and destruction but in reality he was only doing what he as a god had to do, which was being the Lord of death and collecting souls.
- Ogbunabali was believed to be the deity of death of the Nigerian Igbo people. He was said to punish criminals and sinners by killing them at night while they were asleep.

3.4.Heroes in Mythology

This section of mythology was set to gather most of the stories and tales related to superheroes in different mythologies of the world. It is one of the most fascinating aspects of mythology due to the creativity of the stories it contains, stories of fantastic or supernatural humans who dedicated their lives to serving and protecting. Many of those heroes were either the offsprings of gods which gave them certain of their parents' abilities, or were simple human beings with an admirable courage. The following examples are some among many. (Youtube)

- Bellerophon was one of the most famous heroes of Greek mythology, his most known achievements were defeating the Chimera that had the body and head of a lion, a second head of a goat in the lion's back and a serpent's tail. This creature was one of the most evil monsters in the Greek mythology, and the goat head was the most dangerous of all because it spit fire. He was also known for gaining control over Pegasus, a creature often mentioned in Greek mythology as a horse that had wings.
- Loki was one of many heroes mentioned in the Norse mythology, he was believed to be a god who would at times get along with gods and other times would act against their will. He was best known as a shapeshifter which gives him the ability to transform into any living creature he wanted, therefore making it hard for others to recognize him. He was known for helping the two gods Odin, god of war and wisdom,

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and Thor, god of thunder, in their different quests providing them with plans and strategies that did not always have positive results.

- Hua Mulan was a warrior woman who was known as the hero of the Chinese Northern Wei who took her father's place and fought for twelve years alongside her dragon ancestor Mushu and the Captain Li Shang in the war of Northern and Southern dynasties disguised as a young man. After being acknowledged as a warrior woman she returned home. Her story was considered a myth as her name could not be found in any of the registers, there were no birth certificates pointing to a woman having the same name which made the credibility of her existence a hard task.
- Cú Chulainn was an Irish demigod who was believed by many scholars to be the incarnation of the King Lugh who happened to be his father. His story contained too many versions which makes it somewhat difficult to be taken into consideration as he was told to have been conceived three times. Cú Chulainn was best known for killing Chulainn the guard dog of Culann, a Smith (metal craftsman) at a very young age and offering to take his place until a replacement would be found, consequently earning him the name of Cú Chulainn. Furthermore, he was more famous for transforming himself into a horrifying monster destroying everything in his passage and unable to differentiate between enemies and friends.
- Beowulf was a Swedish hero mentioned in an old English poem of the same name. He was known for defeating Grendel, a giant monster that attacked the Geats' king's residence, and Grendel's mother to later on become the king of the Geats, a North Germanic tribe living in southern Sweden during the middle ages. He then slays a dragon fifty years after, to be deadly injured.

4. The Contribution of Mythology

Mythology in itself is a complex and vast subject to discuss. Each myth around the globe holds a part of truth that cannot be always understood in a proper way, which results into different arguments on the matter so it is far more than logical to relate it with the following elements.

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4.1. History

History is divided into different periods of time in which many events have happened and its relation to mythology is known for that purpose, as in each century new tales would be born created by the civilization of that particular period. The word " Mythology " in itself means story of the people, which means that every single myth in that specific period of time can be considered as part of that civilization's history as those myths describe their story. History and Mythology are different, but at the same time related as they both focus on the events that happened in the past. Although one is based on facts while the other is the embodiment of people's beliefs they both share the common objectives which are to explain, inform and give proper meaning to what happened in a certain period of time. Their relation with each other could be found in different myths about hero-warriors fighting in wars like the Persian hero Rostom. (ScienceDirect)

4.2. Culture

Mythology is one of the basic pillars of culture as it introduces people to the ways of thinking and living of ancient civilizations, as culture is the term used to gather all kinds of knowledge about traditions and beliefs of a certain group of people. Mythology being both the study and gathering of several myths and tales is related to culture as it tells the story of different civilizations around the globe, as many customs and traditions were practised as a result of certain beliefs that are related to mythology. Different ancient rituals across the globe were practised holding a mythological meaning, such as in Holland where newly married couples would plant Liliun flowers from the valley around their house to have a happy marriage. Or in South Korea, where the dead ones are taken out of their graves after being buried for 60 years, due to the lack of burial space ; their ashes are then turned into beads of different colors. The beads are then put on dishes or glass containers to keep the lost ones nearby. (Encyclopedia)

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4.3. Religion

Religion is the belief in something that is either corporeal or disembodied, and there is practically no difference between religion and mythology as they complete each other. It is related to mythology because of different customs and traditions practised by ancient civilizations as it was the case for the Inca Civilization, who would offer human sacrifices to their deities believing it would bring them peace and harmony as well as divine protection. Several myths from different civilizations were religious such as the myths about Gods in Greek and Roman mythologies, therefore creating a strong bond between religion and mythology. Religion and mythology are similar in the sense that they originate from people's beliefs. Mythology is a part of religion as it narrates the stories and describes the actions of several deities ; it also mentions the practise of different religious rituals as it was the case for the Greeks, the African and native American tribes, as well as for the Egyptians. (Britannica)

4.4. Psychology

Psychology is the study and comprehension of people's manners and behaviour; it explains in a scientific way how the human brain works. The link between Psychology and Mythology was made by the two psychiatrists Sigmund Freud the founder of psychoanalysis, and Carl Jung the founder of analytical psychology who also happened to be Freud's student and then partner. Their work was influenced by mythology as they would use ancient myths to backup their theories regarding psychology. Therefore psychology is related to mythology as they both study the human ways of thinking and reasoning. Freud used the myth of Oedipus, a mythical king of Thebes in central Greece, who was believed to have killed his father and married his mother ; Freud used his name and created the concept of Oedipus complex in his psychoanalytic theory mentioning it for the first time in his book Interpretation of Dreams. The concept referred to one's sexual desire for the same-sex or opposite -sex parent. Freud had his own definition of myth as he stated: "*Myths reflect strong fears and desires that are taboo and usually unable to be expressed in society.*" .Carl Jung also relied on mythology for his psychological work, he adds : "*Myths express characters*

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and stories that are encoded into the human species in prehistory, and therefore express universal concerns." Jung introduced myths as pre-acquired knowledge representing ideas that are part of the mankind, and based his claims out of different mythologies from across the world, making a comparison between those mythologies and pointing at the similarities from which myths were created. He believed that myths and dreams were expressions of the collective unconscious, and that would explain why different civilizations around the world would have similar features. (YouTube)

Conclusion

This chapter shows the purpose of mythology and how it was used in different civilizations. Types of mythology were introduced to explain the diversity of myths in each civilization, and the importance they held for the members of those communities. The chapter also discussed the contribution of mythology and its importance, as well as meaning for the society. In the next chapter, more will be discussed on the different customs and traditions of different civilizations and the role mythology plays in procuring each civilization its proper culture and a significant history.

Chapter Two

Connection of Mythology to Reality

Introduction

This chapter will explore the different customs and traditions of different civilizations, and give an introduction to their mythological origins. The aim behind it is to shed light on the importance of Mythology, and the role it plays in procuring each civilization its proper unique culture as well as rich and significant history.

1. Role of Mythology in Building a Cultural Identity

Mythology has also a part to fill in building any Cultural Identity, as culture comes from Mythology and vice versa. Cultural Identity represents a nation's image in the world, and Mythology being an ancestral heritage contributes by providing ancient beliefs and knowledge, creating a difference between one nation's identity and another.

1.1. Definition of Cultural Identity

Cultural Identity can be best defined as being a member of a certain group sharing one Cultural Ideology or being part of the same generation, therefore having the same cultural, historical and religious knowledge about that specific civilization and having a similar way of thinking as those individuals. Cultural Identity is also believed to be the fundamental element behind the shaping of a nation's identity, and making any civilization or nation very different and unique from others. (Encyclopedia)

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Cultural Identity is quite often related to Myths, as local Mythology was considered back in the days to be a form of self-representation and more importantly creating a distinction between different civilizations across the globe. Powers such as politics, economy or even weaponry do not give a nation its Cultural Identity as all these elements can be easily replaced or overpowered with time, but elements like Mythology and everything that constitutes modern day literature can last until the end of time. (YouTube)

Multiple authors would agree on the fact that the link between Mythology and Cultural Identity is unbreakable as they complete one another, reliefs of mythological creatures or legendary figures for example can be seen decorating the church's nave and that shows the role of Mythology in building an original Cultural Identity for each nation, as well as introducing modern people to the knowledge owned by ancestors, and their techniques of making sense of the world. Each author has a unique method of picturing the way Mythology contributes in giving roots and proper purpose to a certain nation. Countless examples could be taken into consideration and these are a few among many honorable mentions.

- *"The point of mythology or myths is to point to the horizon and to point back to ourselves : This is who we are ; This where we came from ; And this is where we're going. And a lot of Western society over the last hundred years - The last 50 years really – has lost that. We have become rather aimless and wandering."* J. Michael Straczynski an American television, film screenwriter and producer highlights a point, which is that Mythology is set for humans to understand who they are, and the nature of everything surrounding them hence making sense of the world.

- Thomas Bulfinch adds : *"Without a knowledge of mythology much of the elegant literature of our own language cannot be understood and appreciated."* As an American writer, he affirms through his statement that being informed about Mythology helps in the comprehension of modern culture.

- *"Cultures produce myths because they satisfy a deep-rooted human need : the need to make sense of life. Myths are appealing because they reduce the complexity of experience, by making things seem simple and absolute ; myths define popular realities which are accepted readily, even uncritically."*

Dr. Matthew Screech a lecturer in French, Department of Languages at Manchester Metropolitan University, and other of Masters of the Ninth Art expresses his opinion about Mythology. According

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to Dr. Screech Mythology is a way of simplifying the complicated, as well as understanding life by providing explanations to be accepted as they are without being questioned. - "*Every human society possesses a mythology which is inherited, transmitted and diversified by literature.*" Northrop Frye Canadian literary critic and theorist who had a descent reputation and notable influence in the 20th century, says in his words that there are several Mythologies for different civilizations across the globe, therefore those Mythologies are communicated and classified separately through literature. (Google Quotes)

These different authors although living in different places of the world, not being from the same era and never having met each other all agree on one point, Mythology is part of human beings journey of discovery as well understanding the purpose of their existence, thus it can be found everywhere. It contributes in life more than one might assume, hence having no knowledge may lead to several misconceptions about its existence and origins.

1.2.Importance of Mythology in Shaping a Cultural Identity

For centuries Mythology has existed and been part of what now constitutes the world's population. Mythology was, and still is, a way of letting the human mind run wild and transform every single detail about the human life such as illnesses, fears or hopes into something very farfetched or even supernatural. But Mythology plays a much bigger role in life than one might expect as it is required for building a strong and independent Cultural Identity; as Culture, Mythology, Religion, Traditions and Customs intertwine to shed light onto the origin of a precise nation. Several examples from around the globe can be taken into consideration.

1.2.1. China

China has been through 21 dynasties through the course of history, therefore their Mythology is consistent and holds proper meaning according to their beliefs. Chinese people have a calendar called the Lunar Calendar which measures the rotation of the moon around the earth, which makes the days of the year decrease to 354 comparing to the Solar Calendar that has 365 days a year, that is why the new year's date changes constantly in China. (YouTube)

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Another fact to know about this culture is that there are 12 animal zodiac signs, each newborn is assigned with the animal representing their year. There is a myth surrounding the origin of those zodiac signs as according to the myth, Emperor Jade ruler of the Heavens stated that each year should be represented by an animal, and he organized a race in which the twelve first ones to arrive would be the chosen ones. The cat was back then best friends with the mouse asked the mouse to wake him up at the first gleam of light, the mouse agreed but later on left forgetting to wake up the cat, and was the first one to arrive by tricking the ox into carrying him across the river then jumped as soon as they reached the land to be the first one to arrive, it is stated that from that day on the cat and mouse have become sworn enemies because the cat did not make it to the race in time, and people having the cat and mouse zodiac signs are said to feel hateful towards each other and the twelve animals cited above all appear on the Lunar Calendar. The dragon myth remains one of the most famous myths to have ever existed around the world, dragons are mentioned in several Mythologies but it is a sacred one in China, as the dragon is one of the 12 animals appearing on the Lunar Calendar, and one of the Chinese zodiac signs; therefore confirming the existence of a snake like creature breathing fire out of its mouth and living in volcanoes. (YouTube)

1.2.2. **India**

When it comes to Hinduism different tales, traditions or ancient beliefs are brought to light to show the symbolism and importance of Mythology into shaping the modern Hindu society. The Holy Festival also known by Party of Colours or Phalgun is a sacred event celebrated in Spring aiming to praise fertility.

The festival has a much deeper meaning as it originates from a Myth in which an evil king ruled in India. Thinking he was invincible he forced every person of his kingdom to worship him, but a little boy named Prahlad was not afraid of him and refused to praise him. The evil king then attempted to scare Prahlad as best as he could but failed, and that made him very angry so he started thinking of a way to hurt the little boy, hence he decided to put Prahlad onto his sister Holika's lap, as she had a special power that made her able to sit in fire without getting hurt. The king thought that Prahlad would get hurt by the fire but something unexpected happened, the child got out of it uninjured and the king's sister disappeared in the flames. Because Prahlad had been a good boy neither the king nor his

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sister could hurt him, and Indians have been celebrating the Holy Festival to show that good always wins against evil. (YouTube)

But Hindus have also multiple temples holding Myths of their own, one of them is the Sugali Mata temple located in Auwa, Rajasthan this temple serves as a home to the tilted necks deities fixed on its ground, they are believed to throw an illness curse on whoever tries to change them and replace them with perfect ones, even the perfect idols are believed to tilt their necks after some time. It is also said that in order to remove the curse they would have to put the old deity back on. Several people across the country visit the temple to pay their respect. (Britannica)

1.2.3. Mexico

The Mexicans give an important value to one of the oldest civilizations in history; it is the very well-known population of the Mayas. In the state of Yucatan, at the bottom of one of the oldest pyramids, the pyramid of Acanceh, residents of the area have created special courses to teach children about the ancient Mayan Myths, different ways are used such as using puppets and masks, as well as new technologies to let them learn about the mythological, and magical creatures that were once presumed to live in the Yucatan forests and lagoons. The point behind those courses is to ensure the preservation of those Myths, and to encourage children to imagination and creativity. (YouTube)

The city of Chichen Itza built by the Mayas also witnessed its share of mythological beliefs; Spanish records show that it earned its name from the large wells surrounding it, serving as sacred places where the inhabitants would throw living individuals as a sacrifice to the lord of rain, the God Shop. There is a Myth about Chichen Itza's most famous building that the Spanish named El Castillo which is said that twice a year on the day of the Spring and Autumn equinoxes a shadow in the shape of a serpent would slide down the stairs of the seventy nine foot monument, until it reaches the head of the serpent head at the bottom which guards the Mayan's precious findings about maths and astronomy. (History)

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1.2.4. New Zealand

The Maori have been living in New Zealand for centuries now, and their culture and symbolism have a big role in the land's contemporary art. Colin McCahon was one of the first painters who earned an international reputation, his paintings were defined as unique and out of the ordinary as he was inspired by Maori's culture and refined sense of art. His paintings depicted mythological and religious beliefs of the ancient civilization residing in New Zealand, he gave the land a whole different artistic level as he did not only use the stories and myths of the area but also integrated the European culture alongside it, he paid to Maori and European gods a different kind of respect and cultural appreciation. (Artist Profile)

Different Myths and tales from Maori origins were passed from generation to generation, some are integrated to New Zealand's history as the Pakeha (non-Maori) or Kiwis (citizens of New Zealand) consider them as part of their culture. The Myth of the first woman is one among many, as the story goes that Tane Mahuta god of the forest convinced the other gods to make a woman, to populate the earth then formed the body of a woman with red earth, and gave it life with the breath of the god of wind, he then breathed as their noses were linked and the woman came to life. The breath of life called Hongi became the official greeting of the Maori; Prince Henry of Sussex as well as his wife the Duchess Meghan Markle were welcomed with this traditional greeting at their arrival to New Zealand, which underlines the importance it sustains among the community. (Tamaki Maori Village)

1.2.5. Africa

The Céko masquerade in the Niger comes from the Myth of the Boso's culture hero Toboji Centa from the village of Gomigoto. According to the Myth, Toboji was taken by the spirits into a bush; they were ones who taught him the traditions and customs of the masquerade. Although this Myth is only known among the fishermen community of the region, the masquerade is nevertheless celebrated and respected by all the inhabitants of the region, who learned about it from the fishermen. (Encyclopaedia)

Death was believed to have originated from a Myth, and was about Kintu the first king of Buganda who named himself Kintu as the "father of all people ". Kintu fell in love with Nambi the sky

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goddess and daughter of the superior god Ggulu. In order to marry her, Kintu was assigned with different tasks to accomplish, in the end Ggulu gave them his blessings but warned them to never come back to the heavens. As Walumbe, Nambi's brother would follow them down to earth; Kintu and Nambi lived on the earth and had children until Kintu realised that he forgot to bring nuts to feed the chicken. Nambi then decided to go back to heaven but when she came back her brother Walumbe (death) came with her to kill their children. Nambi and Kintu begged Ggulu for help so he sent Nambi's brother Kaikuuzi to fight with Walumbe, at the end Walumbe escaped in the profound depths of earth and created the Underworld, and became its master and since that day death has lived on earth. (African Mythology A to Z by Jeremy Roberts and Patricia Ann Lynch)

Muslim countries such as Algeria, Egypt and Morocco all share a Myth that goes back to ancient generations, the Myth of the Saints. In Egypt for example, the Myth has been passed down from the ancient Egyptian civilization. According to their beliefs Saints were sacred people with superpowers such as healing and flying fast, even after the arrival of other religions such as Islam and Christianity, people still believe in their existence thinking they need them to feel safe. Now in modern Islamic society Saints are given the name of "Wali " and are attributed special shrines, where people can go visit them and pay their respects to them, while in Christian communities it is the appearance of what is considered to be the Virgin Mary's spirit that Christians consider sacred. (YouTube)

1.2.6. Native America

Native Americans were a population constituted of culturally different and not unified tribes living on the lands before the arrival of the Europeans, who used those beliefs to back up their claims regarding the natives being uncivilized and barbaric. Those tribes had nothing in common and had completely different Mythologies of their own. (ScienceDirect)

Many Myths emerged from those indigenous peoples; one of them was the Myth of the Wendigo/Windigo a creature with a human-like body and seemingly no lips and long pointed teeth. This creature was believed to appear on very cold winter and would devour living human beings. According to the natives a person would turn into a Wendigo due to starvation and freezing cold. The Myth is still brought in modern day America where sightings of the creature have been claimed through the years. This Myth led to the apparition of a new phobia called the Wendigo Psychosis that

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would push people into becoming cannibals, because of their fear of becoming one and many cases have been revealed throughout history, some of them gained a big audience such as the case of Swift Runner who killed, and digested all of his family members while on vacation in 1879, and was convicted to death penalty on the same year, or Vince Li who committed the murder of Tim McLean in 2008 on a bus in Canada and many more. (YouTube)

The Rain Dance was and still is a custom tradition performed on several occasions; it is performed by spinning around in circles and chanting for the rain to fall. The purpose of this dance is known by many people around the globe, but what seems to be forgotten about this tradition is that it holds a Mythological part within it as well, as it originated from the Native American ethnic tribe of the Cherokee, the reason it was initially created according to the tribe's beliefs was not only to call out for rain but also to keep away bad spirits from the area. (ScienceDirect)

1.3.Preservation of Mythology

The importance of preserving those different and authentic Mythologies, that have existed for millennia between different societies is one among many ways, to ensure the stability and the good posture of culture in building a nation's identity, a specific Cultural Identity of its own and to make sure that those Myths and all the artistic value they contained, does not get misinterpreted by future generations as valueless content, or worse forgotten. (YouTube)

Mexico is one of the nations still holding onto that precious heritage, as they still use and believe in their ancestral Mythology, using it in stories to tell to their children or using it in theatrical shows. As Mexico is one of the nations with a large historical background hosting both the Mayas and the Aztecs, Mexicans have kept and are still practising some Aztec customs as the Ullama game in Northern Mexico, a game where the players have to throw the ball with their hips without touching it for eight consecutive times. Or the celebration of an event called Dia de los Muertos which translates to Day of the Dead, in which people would go visit their buried ones' graveyards cleaning their tombs, cleaning them and making food offerings or writing letters to the dead, wearing skull masks or full skeleton costumes and many other customs. (YouTube)

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Mythology in ancient times gave a farfetched, yet, whole other way of how nature worked, how the world came out to be and boundaries were created in order for the indigenous peoples not to cross them, following their path into the unknown. The tales left by ancestors show that although the lack of knowledge among those individuals, the human brain can operate in the most outstanding ways, the imagination of a single person can surpass any expectations made throughout history. It is almost impossible to discern a noticeable difference between multiple types as story-telling alongside Mythology, such as Folklore, Fairy tales, Legends and many more but according to specialists in the field, what there is to know about Mythology is that each Myth as implausible as it may look, holds a part of truth in it and that is what makes Mythology a subject to discuss. (Encyclopaedia)

Preserving that heritage and integrating it to any nation's modern culture gives Mythology much more value, as culture is known to be a mixture of everything created or imagined by the human mind. The Groundhog Festival in Pennsylvania is another parade having a Mythological side, as the Groundhog Phil is said to be 134 years old while the average one does not live for more than eight years. Groundhog Phil is presumed to have psychic abilities that allow him to predict the end of the winter season. On February 2 of each year the groundhog would be brought to the public sight and celebrated with music and different kinds of food. Phil then either sees his shadow predicting the end of winter or not seeing it meaning six more weeks of winter-like weather. (Groundhog)

Conclusion

This chapter focuses on Cultural Identity's meaning, importance as well as value for a nation, and the role Mythology plays in building in each civilization a different and unique collection of supernatural tales. The chapter also tackles several Mythologies across the world, in addition to their signification for members of the communities they originated from, and appropriate ways for that heritage to be preserved and valorised instead of being lost and forgotten. In the following and last chapter, the cinematographic world will be explored casting light on how Hollywood portrayed and illustrated those tales of mythology spreading the idea of the backwardness of Africans and others and the superiority of the Western mythology.

Chapter Three

Mythology in Cinematography

This chapter will explore the cinematographic world in which several Mythologies were brought to life, it will first discuss how Hollywood portrayed and illustrated those tales for people interested in and curious about Mythology, to picture how those tales were said to have occurred according to a certain civilization's beliefs. The aim behind that is actually to highlight how Westerners kept spreading the idea of the backwardness of Africans to even include their mythology, which in a way justifies their belief about the Africans' incapability to live on their own without the help and guidance of their masters, the Westerners.

1. Famous Mythologies Portrayed in the US Film Industry

For several years Mythology has been used in cinematography as a way of bringing ancient tales back to life, and introducing people to that part of culture they might not know about, or have the habit of taking it for granted. In some, it is the Greek hero who saves the Athenians by killing the monster sent by a God, mighty enough to destroy the whole world in a second. In others, on the other hand, it is a dark soul and evil spirit sent by a witch to torture someone with nightmare, ghosts, monsters and bloods that revenge is obtained. It is even more astonishing to see how the US film industry, most of the times, portrays the Greek, Roman or Viking heroes with much physical strength and superhuman powers, while Africans are seen with a weaker body, but with a witty spirit, and it is very rare to find an

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African or even a native American brought to life as a hero through a Hollywood film, which does not bring any change to what has been claimed.

1.1. Native American Mythology

British insisted on calling the Natives primitive or savage, yet they were crossing the borders of lands they had no previous knowledge about, they took possession of those lands having no respect for the original people of the continent, they considered themselves as the superior class, the ones that according to their beliefs were well-placed to rule the lower classes. They thought that native's ways of seeing and understanding the world were backwards, and believed that it was their mission to show them the right path, but those were pretexts as well as they took pleasure into assaulting and forcing labour on the indigenous peoples.

The make matter worse Native American Mythology was taken for granted by settlers and deemed unsubstantial to be depicted centuries later in 20th century and 21st century American Cinematography in profitable ways. Indeed, most US film producers often use these tales as an inspiration for the purpose of creating appealing content for the spectators, yet credit is never given to the people such tales originate from. For example, American filmmakers in the 60s always depicted Native Americans as barbaric people thirsty for blood. These stereotypes fixated on the Indian-American community in a way that did not only insult, but also devalued and diminished the image of that civilization portraying their culture and knowledge as primitive, and still many movies were based on Myths that originated from the Indian-American community.

One of those movies was the film adaptation of the novel *Pet Sematary* written by Stephen King and published in 1983. The movie was released in 2019 and is about a man and his family who move to a small town with a dark background, the family is informed that not far from where they live there is a cemetery dedicated to pets where the buried pets would be

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resurrected after being buried, the only problem is that they would come back as evil creatures and the reason is that they become possessed by the Wendigo, an Indo American mythological creature with an endless hunger for human flesh, never satisfied.

The family's young daughter is hit by a truck dying instantly, the father still grieving and feeling hopeless decides to bury her in the pet cemetery. The dead girl then one night wakes up but to her parents' horror is no longer human anymore. The Wendigo creature is believed to possess living humans as well as dead bodies of the lost ones to torment the living, and is also said to uncover people's darkest secrets and use them against them, the movie brought those beliefs to life.

1.2. Greek Mythology

Greek Mythology on the other hand was and still is well appreciated and well praised in US movies. To this day, it is one of the most famous Mythologies in the course of history where gods like Zeus, Poseidon, Hades and many more are often mentioned in books, novels, videogames and several movies throughout the years, giving the Greeks the Cultural Identity that made them different from other civilizations living in the same era. Although the disappearance of that once powerful population, their Mythology is still preserved and kept alive in multiple movies like Hercules, Wrath of the Titans, Troy and the list goes on.

Greeks were best recognized by their polytheistic religion as they had several gods they considered as their models, but their gods back in the days did not depict the perfect imagery of gods that can be found in modern religions. Furthermore, their deities were anything a part from perfect as they were cruel towards their followers killing and slaughtering unfairly, they would interact with humans and have offspring with them, and then leave them to their destiny. Their children who were half humans half gods were called Demi-Gods as a part of their Holy parents' powers that they inherited, making them superhuman beings, and they were often mentioned for their heroic accomplishments.

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The Percy Jackson saga is a series of two movies Percy Jackson and the Olympians the Lightning Thief and Percy Jackson Sea of Monsters that were respectively released in 2010 and later on in 2013. These two movies were based on the novel saga written by Rick Riordan, the first book was released in 2005 and the second in 2006. The Movies although being adapted still tackled the story of a teenage boy whose life turns upside down after finding out that he has holy blood running in his veins. He also discovers that he is the son of the god of the seas Poseidon and he finds himself infiltrated in a plot where he is accused of having stolen the lightning bolt of Zeus, god of the sky and ruler of the Olympic Empire.

Percy, alongside his best friend and a new friend, met at the Camp for Half-Bloods go on an adventure to rescue his mother who has been captured by Hades, ruler of the underworld, but their adventure does not end there as they try to reach Olympus in time to return the bolt and claim his innocence and prevent a war from happening. Many mythological creatures, heroes and villains are shown in the movies as his best friend Grover turns out to be a Satyr, his half-brother a Cyclops and Percy himself is portrayed as the modern version of the Greek hero Perseus as Percy is shown slaying Medusa's head just like Perseus.

1.3.Egyptian Mythology

Back to Africa where the cradle of civilisations is, Hollywood has had a long love for Ancient Egypt. The latter's Mythology has always gained a certain amount of recognition throughout the years, novels like the 2011 novel The Throne of Fire written by author Rick Riordan or Tales of Ancient Egypt written by Roger Lancelyn Green and published in 1967. It has also been simulated in multiple movies where mummies would get back to life, or people would have to face the consequences of their actions while entering pyramids and sacred places being not welcomed to enter, like unleashing a 3000 year old curse, or even being trapped in a pyramid and buried alive.

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Ancient Egyptian civilization owned one among many other cultures that were studied, discussed and used as an inspiration in the 21st century, which made Egypt one of the most visited countries in the world. Tourists would come from the four corners of the world to learn about this culture, and see with their own eyes what the members of that Ancient civilization left of heritage and knowledge behind them. The number of people who have visited this cultural country in 2019 did not reach less than 13.6 million, that shows that Egypt does not only have an appealing culture and Mythology for people to question and valorise, but also earns profits out of it. (Egypt Independent)

Their Mythology was the base of several movies and *The Mummy Returns* released in 2001 is integrated to the list. The American movie written and realised by Stephen Sommers, centres around Rick O'Connell, his wife Evelyn and their son Alex, the family goes on an adventure and find the bracelet of Anubis god of death and master of the Underworld. They decide to take it and that is when the curse strikes as they are almost drowned in the Nile's waters submerging the historical monument. In the meantime, Baltus Hafez an employee at the British Museum with Lock-Nah, a red turban guard and Meela Nais, the reincarnation of Anck-Su-Namun, the high priest Imhotep's lover in Ancient Egypt; are trying to resurrect Imhotep and awaken the Scorpion King Mathayus who sold his soul to Anubis in exchange for his army's control and power.

Rick and his family end up finding more than what they bargained for as Alex their son is kidnapped for having the bracelet stuck on his arm. Evelyn finds out she is the reincarnation of Princess Nefertiti, the bracelet's keeper and the ancient Pharaoh Sati I's daughter, Rick turns out to be a member of the Medjaÿ the warriors who offered help to the Egyptian Army in ancient times. Although the movie received a certain amount of negative criticism, due to the addition of new details that were not mentioned in the first movie, it still was a success as it brought over 443 millions of dollars. (Imdb)

1.4.Irish Mythology

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Another example of how biased the Hollywood is, is related to the Irish Mythology, one not as famous as other Mythologies. Several researches have been made to try and understand what that culture was all about. That Mythology was judged as incomplete as it lacked details, the description of the events as well as that of the people or magical creatures mentioned in those Myths was said to be vague. Many examples were given, one of them was about the inexistence of a Myth surrounding the creation of the world, as according to scholars in Irish Mythology the world had always existed, or the Myth of Fintan husband of the leader of the first inhabitants of Ireland Cessair, who was presumed to be the daughter of Noah's son Bith. although not being mentioned in the Bible, found himself caring for a tribe constituted of 49 women and decided to escape the responsibility by jumping into a river, and transforming into a salmon fish with no further explanation provided on the subject.

Although a certain number of British movies were made based on Irish Mythology, not many made it to Hollywood, almost none. Many theories have been made concerning the reasons why that Mythology did not earn a big success at the opposite of others that were considered as sources of inspiration for authors and scenario writers, one of the reasons was theorised to be as previously mentioned it is the lack of background information and plausible explanations. Explanations as to how something came out to be the way it did or how something happened, the details that can be found in other Mythologies, although that did not deprive it from its coherency.

Irish Mythology unlike others is based on people, the presence of deities is not mentioned very often and it is filled with a certain amount of magic. The second reason behind the non-use of this Mythology is the fact that it is not archived like other Mythologies, according to researchers all the tales constituting what is now known as Irish Mythology were not gathered from an ancient pagan Irish civilization, but instead collected from the writings of Christian scribes during the quest to spread Christianity, which challenged American cinematographers

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into using it to create movie plots as it originated from different sources, with different descriptions and turns of events.

However, some movies were still made in the United States based on that Mythology, one of them was *The Secret of Roan Inish* an American/Irish movie released in 1994 written and directed by John Sayles, produced by Sarah Green and Maggie Renzi. The work consists of a 103 minutes duration which narrates the story of young Fiona Conneely who has moved to live her grandparents due to her mother passing away and her father's health. While living with her grandparents, her grandfather tells her about the story of their lineage ; she hears later from her cousin Eamon that Selkie (seal-woman) blood runs in the family. Him and her long lost baby brother Jamie, among many other members have it in their veins.

Fiona and her cousin decide to make a plan to go and look for her missing baby brother. As they arrive to shore, she thinks she has found her brother as she sees a little boy being fed by seals that were playing with him, they decide to renovate the cottages that their grandparents abandoned in the island of Roan Inish without their grandparents knowing. As the owner of the house they were currently living in was planning on selling it they had to move, the grandparents learn about their secret and the grandmother agrees to go back to Roan Inish in the hope of finding her lost beloved grand-child. The family gather their belongings and leave and the family is reunited with their dear Jamie. The movie received positive critics and had a rating of 7.8/10 as it pictured the Myth of Selkies in the modern era and showed the importance of humans' relation with nature and animals.

2. Exploitation of Mythology

In modern movies the use of Mythology is present everywhere, movies or tv-shows and even cartoons all contain a part of that historical heritage, but the way Myths are represented in those works does not always mean that they are used or portrayed in a proper way, as often many details are omitted or modified to fit the plot that the cinematographers have in mind. In

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movies, everything has an explanation, even if it is a farfetched one, still every detail serves a purpose and every character has a role to play, which is the case in some Mythologies like the Greek one for example, but not all of them can be depicted the same way, yet scenario writers and movie producers tend to follow the exact same plan for all the fantasy and horror movies based on Mythology, introduction to the hero's abilities, the apparition of a problem, finding the solution, happy ending and making those tales seem less complicated than they actually are.

Many Myths were taken from different cultures and then reshaped to the advantage of movie makers, movie adaptations usually focus only on the paranormal and supernatural parts of those tales judging the other details irrelevant in the stories. Lead characters in movies are also always described as brave and powerful heroes risking their lives for the sake of human kind, meanwhile the mythological creatures are repeatedly given the usual cliché of monsters trying to harm and kill people or spirits controlling people's minds and that need to be chased from the land by the hero. What is not discussed in those movies is the reason behind those creatures' behaviour, the background of the story behind why they are the way they are, and why they act the way they do. At the end, those supernatural beings end up being defeated by the lead, and everyone returns to their peaceful lives as if nothing had happened. Often cinematographers make the plots of their movies reach a certain extent, where viewers start hating the existence of those creatures and fearing them, to the point that some of them start creating urban legends of their own about mythical beings.

People across the globe have no certified knowledge about the Mythologies that were once the centre of belief of ancient civilizations, or how they contributed in giving form and meaning to the cultures that gave modern nations a unique identity and individuals a sense of comprehension as well as a place among society. The truth is that a lot of persons have never heard a Myth as it was originally told in ancient tribes, the information they were able to gather about those tales were picture to them through movies, which are not the appropriate sources of knowledge to use when they are seeking answers. Producers might not be aware of

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the consequences resulting out of the changes, added or omitted details in film adaptations, as it does not only change people's perspectives or point of views regarding a culture, but could be also considered an offense to the people owning it as they juggle with it however they please.

3. Mythology in Modern Society

What most people fail to understand is that Mythology equals culture; it was neither created to hold a sense of logic nor was it supposed to be questioned. Civilizations in ancient times did not possess the technology or ways of information and communication that modern nations have, the Myths were their ways of making sense of the world surrounding them. Mythology gave to those communities that would later on turn into nations, a simplified approach of how life worked helping them get along with their lives, and unravel an answer for every mystery they encountered each passing day.

Movies gave a certain vision that consisted of magic, heroes and villains, and the stories did not go beyond that. One might have in mind that multiple factors play along, the budget, the timeline and the material needed, but the reality is otherwise. Many producers have set in mind the idea that works that do not focus on supernatural, and do not have a superhero fighting a villain would not be taken into consideration by viewers, meanwhile viewers count on those movies to solve the mysteries of a Mythology they neither know nor understand. If one does not search for the original Myths that were first mentioned in the archives, then there is no way of understanding its existence or how it came out to be in the first place.

4. Fighting Colonial Prejudice through the Preservation of Mythology

One of the serious threats discussed in this chapter is how local myths have been taken as a material to diminish the value of a certain culture over another. This was primarily the concern of colonial powers, who in an attempt to justify their presence in Africa, tried to lead

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the public opinion under false pretexts claiming that Africans were backward and needed someone to lead them to the right path. More importantly, through movies, such stereotypes have long been kept alive circulating within communities to acquire general consensus that Africans had no heritage and indeed they were savage as most movies portrayed them as such. The Westerners on the other hand, were similar to the Greek heroes, the Roman ones of the Vikings who are nothing but witty or with dark souls. They are actually the saviours of the world who would help the oppressed even if they have to destroy their towns and kill their people; it is only for their own good that they are doing so.

Such ideas are in fact misleading and the worst is when they are used to indoctrinate youngsters who would see their culture as backward and not fit to still exist. This is what leads nations to lose their identity for they no longer accept their and in the process of acquiring the colonizers, they would always be outcast. For that, it is more than necessary to find the proper way to avoid perpetrating what imperialistic powers have left by letting people and children have background knowledge about their culture and embrace it. This includes their Mythology that would be included within the school curricula as it is the case in some countries. This would be better as it would let them first learn from the source before they absorb it through films.

Taking the Algerian case, it is known that secondary school pupils, Literary and Foreign Languages streams, study “Ancient Civilisations” as part of their curriculum. It is worth noting that they study various civilisations and a part of mythology is included in the process of teaching, however, nothing is included when the Algerian mythology is concerned. This explains why a great deal of people knows almost nothing about Algerian mythology; apart from stories of monsters.

It is true that teaching Mythology in schools would not only explain reality or the origin of life, but this will give people an idea how rich their culture is. It will also show how unfair imperialistic powers were when they kept deforming reality by misinforming the children and

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adults about the origins and meanings of each Myth. This way, their heritage would be preserved and this would give people the chance to understand the way ancestors used to see the world.

Conclusion

This chapter shed light on the use of several Mythologies in cinematography from how they were originally narrated, to how they were represented in movies. The work also points at the misconceptions one tends to obtain after viewing such movies, as well as the profits earned from those projects to the nature of reputation Mythologies of different civilizations receive, from their use in film adaptations. This happens to be destructive at the same time for it prevents people from keeping themselves in contact with their origins and ancestors and gradually destroys the culture of the once oppressed to finally justify the presence of imperialist powers in their lands.

General Conclusion

In the light of what has been mentioned, the study has shown the importance and meaning of mythologies for different cultures. The work has also provided several examples to shed light on the contribution of this type of heritage in building a cultural identity unlike no other; and many mythologies from different parts of the world were mentioned, with the aim of pointing at their differences and their symbolic impact on the members of a same group or community. Furthermore, this dissertation has highlighted the importance of preserving mythology and similar ancestral legacies, hence showing the negative outcomes of having no previous or knowledge at all on the matter. The lack of information about the culture and mythology of a certain group, or community can lead its members to confusion; as they would know little if not nothing about their culture and lineage, consequently feeling lost and misplaced among their own people.

Needless to say that European colonizers did not attribute much value to mythology, and the cultural place it occupies in their colonies' diverse cultures. Europeans always looked down upon indigenous people, and the colonies that did not own the technological advancements that Europeans were mastering at the time. British settlers among many other did not see a thing in those colonized communities, other than they were illiterate, primitive and backward. Colonizers against those ancient tribes' will, took possession of those lands claiming ownership and indoctrinated the local people with the masters' own religion and beliefs. In addition, they imposed changes on individuals who did not ask for it, and were satisfied with the lifestyle they had been living on since the beginning of times. That new form of imperialism was erasing the knowledge and culture of colonies that had existed for thousands of years if not more.

But that was not the end, because even though slavery has been put to an end, and colonialism is not as common as it used to be from the 16th-19thc period, mythologies of tribes like African and Native American ones are always portrayed in movies as being evil with dark forces, while the other mythologies of European origins such as the Greeks and Romans were depicted as the symbol of bravery and good will, just like European settlers thought of themselves as the superior class and believed it was their mission to guide the inferior ones, and the American film industry is indeed working on preserving such

stereotypes by portraying Africans and Native Americans as savage, backward and can never be masters of themselves

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