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## The Persuasive Nature of Mythology and Folklore Through Human Behavior, Entertainment, and Popular Culture

Jaylan Valentine  
[jaylanval99@yahoo.com](mailto:jaylanval99@yahoo.com)

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The Persuasive Nature of Mythology and Folklore Through Human Behavior,  
Entertainment, and Popular Culture

Jaylan Valentine

Center for Adult and Regional Education, Murray State University

BIS 437: Bachelor of Integrated Studies

Professor Scott Douglas

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of the collected research explained throughout this paper, is to provide information on how humanity has been shaped through history. Through the recognition of mythology and folklore as the most influential aspects in the overall evolution of mankind. The creation and use of mythology and folklore are directly intertwined with the history that humanity teaches itself through years of schooling, recorded research, and oral communication. The sharing of mythology and folklore has changed throughout history as humanity continued to grow, starting from oral storytelling and arriving at present-day cinematic displays. Some of these cinematic representations are commonly known and popular films from the past few decades and can be hard to recognize. The way in which each character and creature is created serves a purpose to prevent action/belief or to direct humanity in a certain direction, sometimes for personal benefit. There are lost ideologies and beliefs throughout time, although through the collected research, a newfound recognition can be created.

## **Mythology and Folklore Introduction**

The persuasive nature of mythology and folklore has influenced human behavior, entertainment, and popular culture. There is an influential aspect to mythology that has shaped physical, emotional, and spiritual/religious lifestyles throughout time. These influences come from original stories or those that have progressively been altered through verbal affirmations and realistic contributions. While the list of positive influences and changes we can attribute to mythology have been created throughout the history of mankind, some negatives have stirred fear and anger. These effects are explored in a wide variety of publications covered here, with examples for clear imagery and understanding of the full effects of mythology and folklore on mankind.

Human history is built around stories passed down through generations and these stories are rooted in common and uncommon mythologies and folklore from all cultural backgrounds. These stories are not only taught and shared in current storytelling forms but reenacted in new ways through human behavior without any knowledge of doing so.

### **Defining Mythology**

Research from “MYTH AND MYTHOLOGY” comes from Joseph Baumgartner, an experienced writer on mythological subjects and human history. His writings pertain to the folklore of the Philippines and Spain, along with other historical articles that have no direct correlation to the subjects of mythology or folklore, but that add to the understanding that history and myth are often the same. There are various forms of mythology covered, each with its definitions and examples. While each has a place in shaping known history, much has been lost

in translation or diluted by humanity. There is a correlation between myth and historical revelation as expressed in this review.

Baumgartner teaches the conceptual meaning of the word “myth” and its correlation to the Greek language. His definition states that “Myth is the ‘word’ that announces the true state of things, what is factual, what really happened” (Baumgartner 1974). “Myth never looks for proof nor does it ever proceed in an apologetic fashion. Its language is that of simple affirmation” (Baumgartner 1974). His understanding of myth is that it proves facts although it does not meet the natural characteristics of fact; it does not always provide evidence other than legend or word-of-mouth. The author explains that the correlation between that divine power and mankind is “mythical thinking” which occurs when people begin to believe truly in the affirmations of myths and use them for definitions and examples of their truths. He explains that myths are simply explanations of mythical events, such as the rise and setting of the sun and moon each day. Due to the legitimate recurrence of the events that take place, people can witness them, then they can mentally believe further in the myths. “In its turn, myth authenticates ritual by referring men to the first performance of the sacred act that took place in archaic (primordial) time” (Baumgartner 1974), giving humanity its reason for unwillingly devoting itself to myths.

There are different kinds of myths that affect life in different ways, “The primary function of myth is to ground present events in primordial divine acts ... It is the very essence of myth to relate everything to the origin of all things; in so doing it answers man’s questions about the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of the universe” (Baumgartner 1974). Examples of the myths discussed are provided and defined as follows, “theogonic myths answer questions about the origin of the gods; cosmogonic myths try to explain the genesis of the universe and the essential conditions governing its continued existence” (Baumgartner 1974). This is followed by the definition of

“anthropogenic myths” which are myths that bring forth an explanation of the creation of man, other living nature and celestial bodies/meteorological events. “The origin of myths explain the conditions of life and the timeless order governing human existence” (Baumgartner 1974). These are myths that shape people's lives and the choices they make throughout their lives. This is the larger picture of a grouping of myths that follow in a specific order to be understood/rationalized by mankind, “... such as flood myths, which are fairly widespread, but never ritually re-enacted. The end of the chaotic time as it appears in the transformation myths often has as its sequel the myths of a redeemer to come. Such soteriological myths tell a story of divine intervention for the salvation of mankind. Eschatological myths, finally deal with the conditions that bring it about and its expected course” (Baumgartner 1974).

Next, he defines mythology by sharing examples of different forms of mythology and those who shined a pathway for them to be commonly acknowledged. Mythology is the telling of stories of the gods, relating them to the world that is known. Many paved the way for myths' importance and contributed thoughts and studies on the topic of myths. “G. V. Vico (1668-1744) held man’s imagination to be the primary factor in the formation of myth” (Baumgartner 1974). F. W. J. von Schelling (1775-1854) furnished the philosophical underpinnings of myth and its powerful influence on human consciousness. Famous historical philosophers and psychologists have brought forth research and ideas such as “... S. Freud (1856-1939), who saw in myth the expression of repressed individual desires” (Baumgartner 1974).

The article concludes by discussing revelation and the difference between revelation and myth. Revelation is defined as an event from divine power and its relation to the creation or forming of humans or the world. Myths allow for answers to man's questions about the world and how events have occurred throughout history. Myths give mythical answers to life and are

also the reason for people understanding mankind's dependence on God(s) over centuries. That dependence has always been questioned and eventually brought forth the creation of anthropology. Anthropology is defined as the study of what makes people human, through religious nature, spiritual belief, physical acts, emotion, thought processes, etc.

### **The Functions of Folklore**

In "Four Functions of Folklore" the author declares that "... the most effective way to bridge the gap between the anthropological and the humanist points of view toward folklore is through a common concern with common problems, rather than relying as in the past on a common interest in a common body subject" (Bascom 1954). Bascom states that the article does not answer the issue, rather it shares information in the hope that others will formulate their own opinions or collectively produce an answer. The three problems stated are "... (1) the social context of folklore, (2) the relations of folklore to culture, which might be phrased as the cultural context of folklore, and (3) the functions of folklore" (Bascom 1954). Following these three problems is material on folklore containing stories that sit on shelves for far too long, awaiting discovery and study. These oral narratives contain information on past cultures and traditions that are not being viewed, following this topic, Bascom states, "Perhaps the major barrier has been the traditional emphasis upon problems of a literary-historical nature, almost to the exclusion of the investigation of other types of problems" (Bascom 1954). Bascom believes that oral narratives do indeed hold weight in "... the understanding of culture and its functioning in human societies, or whether the study of myth and tale has nothing whatsoever to do with the investigation of human psychology and the adjustment of the individual to his culturally constituted world" (Bascom 1954).



Moving on to the first problem, while also making a point to disclose that this problem is not exactly a problem but instead a collection of related facts and texts, the author defines the topic of discussion and his interpretation of it, stating “The anthropologist is not bound to the scanty remnants of culture, broken tablets, tarnished texts, or fragmentary inscriptions” (Bascom 1945), claiming that anthropologists have made common mistakes while compiling research and through relaying their work. To clarify, “The anthropologist has the myth-maker at his elbow. Not only can he take down a full text as it exists, with all its variations, and control it over and over; he also has a host of authentic commentators to draw upon; still more he has the fullness of life itself from which the myth is born” (Bascom 1954). From this Bascom can express the importance of how context is portrayed, as each detail of the story must be told perfectly. This includes characters, settings, voices, expressions, and more when telling the story, otherwise, the story can become lifeless and die in the minds of those listening. The author believes that a story portrayed incorrectly can die and not carry on or it can be altered and changed from its origin. “The recording of folklore, in itself, is a useful field technique for the anthropologist. It gives further leads for the investigation of the content of culture, ensuring that important cultural details are not overlooked; it provides a non-ethnocentric approach to the ways of life of a people, emphasizing, as Boas pointed out, the things which are important in their own minds” (Bascom 1954).

Folklore also mirrors commonly known cultures and their controversies with anthropologists over time. Malinowski’s work is emphasized, as he discusses how characters can be misinterpreted as wrong or different than how other people might behave; this includes acts such as incest and marriage and how we may view them or may have created our beliefs based on the subjects from stories.

The discussion continues stating that "... the relation between folklore and culture has to do with the fact that characters in folktales and myths may do things which are prohibited or regarded as shocking in daily life," (Bascom 1954). Examples are provided of stories in which characters have had sexual intercourse with relatives, committed violent acts and behaviors, tricksters roaming through lands, etc. It also mentions that humor in society has potentially progressed from folklore and evolved into what we see in popular culture. A prime example of this is "... the mother-in-law jokes and obscene stories in our puritanical society" (Bascom 1954). Bascom continues to discuss the theory of folklore spread through the "Aryan Migration" and inconsistencies in those stories leading to many misunderstandings throughout history. Although he states that "... the discrepancies between folklore and conduct must be explained, not as derived from false etymologies from a common Aryan sun-myth, but as survivals of an earlier, pre-Aryan state of savagery in Europe" (Bascom 1954). To provide support for this statement he identifies superstitious beliefs and ideas that share a deep resemblance to the traditions and ideologies of various peoples and cultures around the world. "However accurately folklore may mirror the familiar details of culture, and incorporate common situations from everyday life...the unusual or even the impossible is an important ingredient of myths and folktales" (Bascom 1954).

The third problem states "...what folklore does for people who tell and listen to it" (Bascom 1954) should not be dismissed as just a story created from the imagination of one and told as entertainment for others. Folklore holds meaning and contains points of creativity through imagination; there is truth within the stories told. Bascom states "A second function of folklore is that which plays in validation culture, in justifying its rituals and institutions to those who perform and observe them" (Bascom 1954), thus folklore and myth are not answers to problems

but rather guides to follow. The next function of folklore has to do with education and its role within non-literate societies, expressing stories of monsters disciplining children and making them behave. He also discusses how they can be used to create peace through songs and uplifting stories. The fourth function is important in creating patterns of behavior within societies. “More than simply serving to validate or justify institutions, beliefs, and attitudes, some forms of folklore are important means of applying social pressure and exercising social control” (Bascom 1954), claiming the importance of folklore to not only children but adults within societies and that it can be beneficial to the use of power to influence or control. Whether that be through the usage of tricking others into believing false consequences of actions or creating social approval through the stories so that others believe in the words of others strongly enough to act on them.

The power that folklore holds when passed verbally by people who are trusting of one another is stronger than most other storytelling forms. That trust can influence people to believe in stories and cause reflection on their actions. The most trusted individuals come from families, where a young person will believe a family member's words or actions without doubt or hesitation because that is the environment in which they were raised. The traditions that a member may claim can be originated through folklore they believe in causes either positive or negative effects on those around them or themselves.

In “The Meaning of Tradition: an Introduction,” the author discusses how when the end of the world is near most people reflect on their past, but when the future brings a new day people instead create forecasts for what that day will bring. This concept is directly related to the term “folklore” as a means of telling stories and recreating the past; it can also guide people through what happens next. Upon entering the twentieth century, “With apocalyptic overtones of millennium beliefs, some scholars could not resist the temptation to speculate on the end of

folklore” (Bronner 2000), as the future was not guaranteed and people feared what was next. The times changed and nothing of apocalyptic nature presented itself thus preserving all life, traditions and folklore. Humanity entered an era in which grouping began to decrease with the development of technology. The article drifts into questioning what will happen next, “Where does that leave folklore? As history deals with change, so folklore answered to continuity, as sociology dealt with group, folklore addressed community; as psychology probed reason, folklore queried belief” (Bronner 2000). “Over time, folklore study’s strongest settlement has been in the area of tradition” (Bronner 2000), leading to the term folklore being coined by Edwin Swidney. Swidney stated that “ ... the professional pursuit of folklore is first the study of tradition ” (Bronner 2000). The author claims that “Even as methods and theories changed drastically from the Victorians to modern-day Americans, the flag of tradition continued to be waved over the territory of folklore” (Bronner 2000). Addressing the argument that folklore and tradition are in association with one another, there is still a problem between the two topics. The article addresses this by stating “So what’s the problem? The bounded ground of tradition for folklore is now arguably the common ground in analysis of culture eagerly embraced by a host of disciplines” (Bronner 2000).

Folklore is portrayed differently in different geographies, like the Indiana folklorists creating a link between culture and communication, while at UCLA, folklorists lean into cultures and world arts, claiming that these programs and studies were originally based around the term tradition although they have been changed to folklorist titles and studies today.

As advances in folklore studies happened, the author claims, “It might be argued that folklore avoided becoming ‘traditional studies’ for the same reason that history did not reconstitute itself as past studies” Empirically based, such disciplines retained their hold on an

image of accumulating facts in the form of descriptive terms such as folklore and history, rather than embracing a philosophical concept. And some may contend, dare I say, that the names are a matter of tradition” (Bronner 2000). The article leans into examples of tradition as well, “Now, savages can neither read nor write; yet they manage to collect and store up a considerable amount of knowledge of a certain kind, and to hand on from one generation to another a definite social organization and certain invariable rules thus gathered and formulated are preserved in the memory, and communication by the word of mouth and by the actions of various kinds” (Bronner 2000). “To this mode of preservation and communication, as well as to the things thus preserved and communicated, the name of Tradition is given...” (Bronner 2000). This provides the context in which groups were able to preserve thoughts and acts in ways that are different from today although still taught today. These basic survival traditions are passed down through generations through facts and folklore that parents tell their children. The article looks at how others’ works on the topic of folklore break down the term and begin to rebuild the concept to better understand its ancestry. The author states “...(1) folklore is continuously being updated and invented; therefore folklore involves innovation, and consequently individual initiative; (2) folk is not a level of society, but a group sharing tradition that could be of any stratum; (3) tradition is not a body of knowledge, but the process understood by the follow spatial and psychological patterns” (Bronner 2000).

This work also addresses the concept of folk music and its relationship to tradition. “For, despite all that has been argued to demonstrate the contrary, it is tradition that makes the folk-song a distinct genre, both as to text and music” (Bronner 2000). To understand how tradition fits into mass culture consider this statement by MacEdward Leach, “America is rapidly developing new cultural stratum-alas for folk story and song. This mass culture, a product of a society

ordered and regimented by technology working through mass media, such as radio, television, and graphic advertising; and masterminded by hucksters selling goods, ideas, social behavior, religions-hard and soft commodities. Perhaps the society that emerges will have the homogeneity of folk society; if so, that will be the only common trait” (Leach 1966). Bronner later questions “If tradition as the basis of folklore is indeed both invented and inherited, individual and social, stable and changing, oral and written, of past and present, of time and space, about both authority and freedom, then what does it exclude” (Bronner 2000)? This is an open-ended question that allows the reader to construct a plausible answer of their own.

Through understanding the definition and perception created by others over the terms of mythology and folklore, it helps to understand the effects of the two made around the world and in other cultures. This allows for a new view of what mythology and folklore accomplish far away from America.

### **Across the Pond**

“English Language and Folklore: A National Resource” contains information regarding Britain and its views on folklore and tradition in comparison to the American view. The article explains that over the last few decades interest has increased in heritage and history among the youth of Great Britain. This is an unusual and noteworthy point as it is loosely translated within the article to a prior belief that history and heritage were studies only royalty and the rich were able to undertake. It was used to teach tradition, good manners and acceptable behavior. In a comparison of cultures the article states that “In most other countries of the western world, folklore stands alongside other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences as a fully fledged subject in its own right. Its actual and potential contribution to cultural life is not only widely acknowledged but also capitalized upon for a variety of utilitarian and/or aesthetic purposes”

(Widdowson 1990). While it is notably useful in other cultures it was not noticed as such in Britains. The history was reserved for the eyes of scholars who would study and analyze the history rather than be public domain. It was thought that Britain was falling behind other countries, “Recent developments in many other parts of the world demonstrate that England continues to lag behind most other countries in its failure to capitalize on its resources in the fields of language and tradition” (Widdowson 1990). Over recent decades as interest grew, archives appeared allowing the information to become public while also introducing the topic of traditional linguistics to school children as it was a part of their history no matter their background. The article discusses the acceptance of folklore and the study within British society as it explores traditional language and behavior of the past. The acceptance was so favorable that “A particularly heartening recent development on the national scene is the inauguration of the British Folk Studies Forum, an independent voluntary organization which seeks to promote, encourage and facilitate the study of folklore in Britain” (Widdowson 1990). The organization would eventually gain the attention and interest of scholars, so much so that it was granted permission to professionally study why folklore/folklife studies became so rare.

The article explains the creation of “The Centre for English Cultural Traditions and Language” (Widdowson 1990) and how the Centre provided extensive research on the correlation between language and tradition. “Its particular focus is on the ways in which tradition and language operate within the wider culture, with special emphasis on form and function in contemporary society, both urban and rural” (Widdowson 1990). The Centre contributed much to recognizing tradition through folklore as it is in the behavior, art, and language of those who lived before. “Turning now to the broader cultural scene, it is difficult to identify any aspect of life in England which is entirely untouched by language and tradition” (Widdowson 1990). This

supports the claim that tradition and language extend to all parts of the land in current time and the past meaning that the history of both is important and can be found in the folklore of the land. “Our lifestyles, perceptions, social behavior, even our sense of humor, constantly betray our origins to outsiders” (Widdowson 1990). “We judge each other by our speech, manners, dress and countless other signifiers which we have come to recognise, mainly through informal means and which influence our response. The fact that such knowledge has become internalized and we often draw on it unconsciously, or may even be unaware that we possess it, suggests that it was acquired through traditional processes of transmission” (Widdowson 1990), thus acknowledging the use of tradition in the subconscious of man. “Our memories may respond throughout our lives to the rhymes, songs and games of our childhood – part of a shared tradition which bridges both time and space. The traditional customs and beliefs we practice lie at the very heart of our Englishness; maintaining them locates us in the stream of time, allowing us each in a small way to continue doing what others before us have done” (Widdowson 1990). In support of this the article states that “When called upon to explain such behavior, we simply respond with such comments as ‘because we’ve always done it. While not strictly true, such remarks emphasize the importance of cultural continuity, as traditionally perceived” (Widdowson 1990).

Tradition is important to all people and their way of life, so exploring it allows us to answer why each cultural group performs and reacts the way it does to all things, proving the importance of understanding folklore better known as tradition.

“Contrary to received opinion, folklorists today are particularly interested in the operation of tradition in the urban context, whether domestic life or in the workplace. Every profession and industry has something to gain from a fuller understanding of these practices, which range from traditional attitudes and stereotypes on the one hand to the acquisition of skills



and techniques informally transmitted by experience on the other” (Widdowson 1990). This is an attempt to understand the effects of researching folklore and its related subjects. The article concludes with the statement that commercials and advertising are the two subjects that rely most on the traditions found within folklore to gain attention from all who relate to those traditions through familiarity.

### **The African Perspective**

Next, we move away from British history and tradition to the influence held on Africa, especially South Africa, as it allows for a new cultural view. It is relevant to know that many folktales originate from Africa, and this is a large influence on the cultural beliefs and customs.

The article “African Folklore: History and Challenges” states that Africana folklore influenced western civilization more than anything, and created the culture and traditions. While implying that Africana traditions are studied in many different fields to route history back to its earliest times for better understanding there is also the claim, “As others have argued, music, dance, language, religions, and other forms of Africana traditions play a much more central role in western identity than do many of the core texts in English, philosophy, and religious studies departments” (Prahlad 2005). Although this history is not honored due to problems within western civilization, “Departmental, racial, class politics have rendered it difficult for such developments to emerge” (Prahlad 2005) these problems prevented the knowledge of these influences from leaving smaller countries such as the one listed by the article; Jamaica. Due to the lack of respect and poor treatment of “African Americans” and black slaves, the growing problem of identity within that community has prevented growth “Because the politics of race characterize every society in which Africana people find themselves, issues of identity have usually been positions in respect to race” (Prahlad 2005). The article reiterates the use of folklore

in times of slavery along with post slavery. It explains that “For instance, some of the major crises confronting American society during this period included moral issues concerning slavery and the humanity of black people and, subsequently, in the postslavery period, the white fear of freed blacks” (Prahlad 2005), providing examples of the usage by stating, “Thus, folkloric images of African Americans during slavery usually worked in concert with propaganda advocating notions of black inferiority an justifying the institution of slavery” (Prahlad 2005). To further the point, the article recalls the work “Uncle Remus” as a way to alleviate the pain in the idea of black people becoming less docile as the years continued in the eyes and minds of the southerners who once owned and controlled all their lives. The article claims that this work is recalled many times through Africana folklore when discussing times of slavery in America, as it plays a large role in the stories and fairytales that support the stereotypes of Africana people. It states that in 1935 and 1990 there were many intelligent black writers who used their intelligence to reject the ideas enforced by these stereotypes that were portrayed in writings such as “Uncle Remus”

The most noteworthy moment in Africana folklore is claimed to be when slaves from the south began to move north in search of freedom and new life, leading to a realization that “if African culture elements could survive the middle passage, they could certainly survive northern migration and urbanization; that positive presentations of folk culture have tremendous potential to redress social ills; and that the climate of culture celebration and affirmation in one in which they could participate” (Parhlad 2005). This would ultimately lead to “Social and political movements (e.g., civil rights, black power, women’s liberation, black arts, and antiwar movements) setting a tone of radicalism and social activism unparalleled by any other decade in U.S. history” (Prahlad 2005). This provides an example of the power that the transmission of

culture had when realized by others and even those who were a part of it. This is followed with the claim that slavery was a potent aspect of African folklore, and led to great writings and discussion pertaining to that new claim. The claim ultimately led to more discussion and questions such as the topic of collections of folklore items. The author states, "Taken further, they embodied the emerging pan-African perspective that connected the political plight of differing New World African peoples by focusing on a commonality of cultural patterns" (Prahlad 2005). This topic caused interest in and active study of folklore to grow as scholars searched to discover and orally imitate the work of black art.

Prahlad continues to discuss the hardship and challenges of expanded and the recognition of African culture and folklore as the way they are perceived as human beings through history and the political resistance that is encountered when the lore begins to expand in any way. This concept is followed by the recognition of the issues through the words of Prahlad and claimed that the folklore continues to move forward no matter the resistance, it then states that "As a group, these articles (1) reflect transnational perspectives; (2) explore new kinds of relationships between folklore and politics; (3) offer new perspectives on intra-racial issues among African people; (4) expand our ideas of "African American"; and (5) engage the impact of technology in process of community maintenance and social identity" (Prahlad 2005). After recognizing this the article concludes with the topic of living mythology, stating "...mythology operates as a contemporary social force within a given society, coloring people's interpretive lenses and influencing the tides of political movements, while ultimately influencing social policy and quality of life as well" (Prahlad 2005), explaining that mythology has a large influence on how society evolves and continues to evolve. While society continues to progress and evolve today and what it will become in the future, it is important to understand the historical context of

mythology and folklore. The history of mythology and folklore can be perceived in many different ways through different studies, making the topic confusing to grasp as a whole.

“The Deeper Necessity: Folklore and the Humanities” begins with a quote pertaining to a common problem in Folklorists studies. “Folklorists too often fail to convince their colleagues in the humanities of folklore’s importance because they treat folklore as handmaiden to other disciplines; because they pay more attention to folk groups than to the broader humanity they share ” (Wilson 1988). When looking deeper into the whole understanding of humanity it could be assumed that Wilson was speaking of music being one of the best examples. After quoting Elias Lonrot discussing how even in the very beginning of humanity it is recorded they there was music and song, Wilson continues to quote Edward Ives in support to the claim that music is the universal language between humans and that there has yet to be a recorded time in human history that music is not associated with. This is followed by a claim that “The point that many of the ‘back to basics’ people seem never to grasp is that the so-called ‘nonpractical’ arts and humanities courses they would remove from the curriculum are the courses fundamentally important in our development as human beings, the courses that deal with our basic human imperatives” (Wilson 1988), in hopes of supporting the earlier claim that there is a larger piece of the history not being studied by folklorists.

As human folklore pertains to many subgenres: music, art, language, etc., it is important to understand the meaning and reasoning behind the creation of each in each culture and time period. “Art, music, literature, and dance come into being not when we move beyond necessity but when we move to a deeper necessity, to the deeper human need to create order, beauty, and meaning out of chaos” (Wilson 1988). The article discusses the positives of folklore studies by stating that “The great contribution of folklore study, of course, is that it crosses most

disciplinary lines, trying all expressive forms together, and especially that it examines the artistic and creative efforts of all human beings, not just the elite or the professionally trained,” (Wilson 1988) and in the argument it is clear that Wilson believes in the words; that rather than taking something at face value we should understand everything about it on a deeper level. It is stated in support that “I shall focus on only three: the tendency to treat folklore as handmaiden to other disciplines and thus to undermine its own intrinsic worth, the tendency to be preoccupied with the past at the expense of the present, and the tendency to pay more attention to individual folk groups than to the broader humanity they share” (Wilson 1988).

To support this first act of treating folklore as handmaiden to other disciplines Wilson states that “What we must have, if we want to win for our subjects greater academic credibility, is not more studies of folklore in literature, but rather careful analyses of folklore as literature,” (Wilson 1988), to understand folklore as a part of human writing and storytelling rather than its own subgenre of work under literature. Wilson discusses how so many others perceive folklore as “primitive” in comparison to art created by critically acclaimed artists, and music by famous composers, when in reality, it all falls under the category of folklore as claimed in the statement “Anyone who doubts this need only walk into almost any arts or humanities department across the country and ask what contribution a folklore course might make to the curriculum” (Wilson 1988). He claimed that folklore is directly related to and involved with these works that Wilson would even make the claim to other scholars that folk literature should not be a term used rather than just claiming all work as literature because the difference is nonexistent.

The article shifts toward a second claim made by Wilson stating that “A second hindrance to the humanistic credibility of folklore is a persisting romantic, or antiquarian, view that recognizes the artistic and humanistic worth of folklore but values the creations of the past

much more than those of the present" (Wilson 1988) This statement brings forth the question of why present day art, music, and literature are not being considered modern day folklore and if they will be in future generations. As there is such a distinct difference between past folklore and modern day that somewhere through time a line was drawn as to what was considered folklore when in reality the term has been proven to stand for all of human traditions and history through every form of work as each are creative and destructive in their own nature. Although with the line of when something is considered "folk" so is the line of what "We were frequently asked to support Native American legends but seldom 'war stories' construction workers tell at lunch breaks; Easter egg decoration but not the decoration of recreational vans; wheelwriting but not lowrider construction" (Wilson 1988). This is followed with concerns that the past works will eventually die out and history will begin to forget due to there not being enough money to keep some things relevant and in the public eye. Although folklore pertains more importantly to the present day rather than any other period of time, as supported by "The difficulty with this past-oriented view is, once again, that it detracts from the humanistic value of folklore" (Wilson 1988).

Wilson claims that it does not matter as to when we perform works of art or other forms of creativity but that they are what make us human, "What is important is the enduring human spirit coming to terms, through art, with the world that exists at the moment" (Wilson 1988) "To ignore the present – to value the people still doing the old things over those doing the new – would be to deny the humanity of our contemporaries" and with this claim Wilson makes it clear that we must still not ignore the past but to embrace the present.

The article concludes with Wilson's final claim that "A third impediment to the development of folklore as a humanistic discipline is what I consider an overweening reliance on

the concept of folk group, too much emphasis on the particular occupational, regional, ethnic, and religious clusters of people who keep the lore alive” (Wilson 1988). The statement makes it clear that in the opinion of Wilson that too many folklorists are concerned about the technicalities of who creates folklore rather than seeing the whole picture that everyone is and it does not originate from small sources although they are all different in their own ways. In Wilsons understanding or perspective of folklore it is claimed that “I am convinced that we generate and transmit folklore not because we belong to a particular nation or to a particular group – not because we are Westerners, loggers, Catholics, or Finns – but because we are human beings dealing with recurring human problems in traditional human ways" (Wilson 1988) This is followed by examples to further support the claim that “The Mormon missionary who initiates a new arrival in the field by having him save worthless bus-ticket stubs, with the idea that they can later be turned in for a rebate, is not much different from a boy scout who sends a tenderfoot on a snipe hunt or a logger who tests the temper of a greenhorn by cramming his lunch bucket full of grasshoppers," (Wilson 1988), implying that folklore is not a specific idea but rather a way to understand each group and their differences while also creating a way to respect their traditions and history.

### **What Happened to Mythology?**

Author Don Bahr offers six answers to this question. His article’s tenets are explained through reason and example providing insight to what has happened to mythology throughout the past two decades.

Bahr relates mythologies to religion in ways that it can not be diminished through others’ writings or words. The article states the relation of mythologies to Christian American attitudes toward the Bible and flag. As many have attempted to damage both through words and physical

action, the meaning (sacredness) deep within the root always keeps it well protected and alive. The article states that "As mythologies are written, their ephemerality is lost. The songs that are embedded in some traditions... are the sole crystallized part of the mythology" (Bahr 1993). A more commonly understood and relatable example of this would be the chorus to a popular song, while not all the words and details are remembered and recited perfectly when others sing it, the chorus is remembered better than the rest.

Answer two, "The Traditional Narrators Lost Their Audiences" (Bahr 1993), expresses that mythologies are fading as they are being replaced and unused by most in the new generation. It states "It is likely that myths and the mythological integration of stories, the endless formation of unfinishable books, have suffered from lack of exercise" (Bahr 1993). Examples of Indian homes not following traditions of telling stories of old so that each generation may remember the past as well as past ones could, but instead spending their nights watching television and having their attention taking away or "... stolen them by design of the white corporate officers, television has at least inherited those audiences by default" (Bahr 1993). The world is remembering less and less as entertainment progresses for not only the youth but everyone, attention spans lessen as more is created. This resulted in less and less stories being passed along from parent to child or friend to friend.

"A Few Old Mythologies Were Written Down and Await Study" (Bahr 1993), explaining that there are three kinds of published written mythologies that await translation and study as they were all written in a language of an older era. The first form being written in various Indian languages, "The most famous are from Mesoamerica, the Popol Vuh from the Quiche Maya and the Aztec Codex Chimalpopoca" (Bahr 1993). The second kind being stories taken from a singular narrator and recorded into English translation. This holds its own issues as the



translations have always been rough when converting from one language to another is complex, especially from one of old, and that the stories are told and recorded from one narrator to another, meaning that the stories may not be the original story as they may not have been informed or recalled all of the details, or added their own details into a story that is recorded forever in human history. The third and final kind of written mythology was that of disassembled stories. These are tales that have been split up and placed within different writings and different eras by the same or different authors. These stories are those that have to do with three main story plots.

“Not only do they openly state the origins of certain things, e.g., humanit, corn, marriage, and death, but they give the impression that everything that they narrate is happening for the first time as far as characters in mythology are concerned" (Bahr 1993). The article states that the stories revolve around teens who are in search of love, their fathers, or they must kill a male adult stranger at some point in time, and the lack of mention of caucasian people except in certain references but without description is notable. This depends on the elements of the myth affecting the result of the story or the audience as more disease, god, animals, etc. causing drastic changes in mood.

The fourth answer, “Mythological Fiction Has Not Arisen" (Bahr 1993), resembles the second answer best as they both refer to the use of the mythology in hopes to preserve it. This answer speaks of the translators and new authors of mythologies, as “The new writers were historians and novelists. There were also poets, song writers, journalists, anthropologists, and more” (Bahr 1993). With so many ways to tell the stories, the stories themselves became lost in translation, while also resulting in the issue that these new storytellers and translators were of caucasian descent and this did not appeal to Indian writers. This leads to the statement that

“Moreover, if the old mythologies are not heard in the homes and are not imitated in fiction, they are very close to finished” (Bahr 1993).

Answer number five; “Those Who Might Have Written Mythological Fiction Were Engaged in Fighting the American Western Movie Myth” (Bahr 1993), states that Indian writers were writing against “frontier myths” A frontier myth is a term created by Indian writers that means an unprovable story that can be proved wrong. The most comparable action to the fight between Indian writers and American Westerners was that of current day politicians campaigning. As it was created to attack the opposing side while creating a lasting impact or belief of what happened historically. While the writers wrote stories, the westerners created films, songs and stories of their own in retaliation, and thus, the historical accuracy of what happened and why/how was lost. The answer diverges into the author's answers to his own questions on the what, why and how of this myth war between the two.

The final answer “Archeology Has Claimed the Subject Matter of the Mythologies” (Bahr 1993), and it criticizes archeology and its historical accuracy in relation to that of mythology. Mythology and Archeology are independent studies on their own although they use one another, as examples are “...biblical archeology as sponsored by believers, or the archeological projects supported by the Church of Latter-day Saints” (Bahr 1993). This answer states that myths can never be fully proved as holistically correct nor can they be disproved as inaccurate, meaning that archeology can always attempt to do so but will never be able to uncover the truth of any myth, the example stated is “... which returns to the first point of this essay is why the writing of the Bible did not remove its sacredness” (Bahr 1993).

The value of this article is not to understand what mythology is entirely but what happened to it. When many think of mythology they think of past eras of life and how they

would tell each other stories of great heroes, dangerous beasts/spirits, beautiful lands, and more, although today this does not happen. At least it does not happen in the traditional sense. The advancing theory is that there is a lack of belief which is a result of the changing popular culture and entertainment over the decades. As attention is not given to one another in face-to-face communication but instead it is gathered to phones, televisions, fantasy books containing fractions of reassembled stories, and more, the solution to the problem is the impossible task of transforming entertainment from what it is now, back to what it was then. To not normalize having multiple television and miniature laptops in our homes and pockets at all times, and to remember the time when people enjoyed the presence of each other more than anything and were able to share the stories that were spoken to them from their elders, is unimaginable. Stories hold a heavy weight on the acts and mindsets of people. The most commonly known stories in today's world originate from a small group of civilizations from past times.

The most commonly discussed civilization in association with mythology and folklore, is that of the Greeks. The adventures stories of the gods battling great beasts and accomplishing impossible tasks is discussed in the article, "Greek Mythology and the Study of Ancient Greek Oral Story" The Greek civilization grew to great popularity over time and is one of the most related to that of the term mythology and folklore in today's society and popular culture. This is the result of Greek history being primarily obtained through word-of-mouth, which lead to the question; "If Greek traditional stories are not classified as literature because they are oral, and if they only in part qualify as mythology, which does not embrace all genres of story, where does one look for a systematic treatment of the folktale or of the traditional story in general" (Hansen 1983). This is answered by the author in this statement "If it is a myth one wants, or a hero legend, one consults the mythologist" (Hansen 1983). "If it is an Aesopic fable, one must consult

the literature on the fable” (Hansen 1983). “If it is an anecdote about Plato or Aristotle, one looks in the scholarship on ancient philosophy” (Hansen 1983). The author goes on to discuss the downfall of developing a better understanding of ancient Greek mythology is that every aspect dissected and studied under an individual field has no connection or linkage to another. There is another issue to developing a better understanding. The scattered stories of the ancient era as they are found all across Europe under different categories mainly pertain to the topic of folklore. This leads to a discussed solution that, “Perhaps the simplest solution would be to modify what we already have, enlarging the familiar and closely related category of Greek mythology to include all Greek traditional stories” (Hansen 1983). This would unite the majority of oral stories and potentially connect enough together to create a better visual into the past. To further support the claim of stories being spread in a vast area of Europe the author would continue with the classification of two of the three main categories of oral stories; “Traditional cosmogonies and most of the traditional stories that are set in the early days of the cosmos or that featured gods as principal characters, or both, are usually classified as myths” (Hansen 1983). “By legends classical mythologists usually mean the traditional stories of the great heroes, such as Perseus, Oedipus, Jason, Achilleus, Meleager, Odysseus, and Herakles, or other traditional stories set in the heroic age” (Hansen 1983). The third issue is folklore, although it does not provide a clear definition of folklore as given for the previous two issues, it is implied that folklore stories related heavily to the non-heroic age were stories created for amusement with no correlation to factual historical events to the extent in which can be confirmed. While some scholars classify stories such as “Odysseus” as folklore, due to its non-historical accuracy, others define the story as mythology since it pertains to the gods; still others claim it as a legend as it is the tale of a great hero. An example is offered that stories can be misconstrued or placed under different

categories depending on the audience and the region where they are told . Providing support to the claim that without one unified understanding of the terminology, stories that relate to the history of the ancient Greeks continue to be scattered without correlation, as stated “In particular, it may be that a triadic classification, no matter how we define its parts, will never contain the date usefully, and that it reflects more our cultural fondness for tripartition than our need for useful analytic categories” (Hansen 1983).

Concluding with the argument of humanity having the need to categorize everything separately rather than attempt to understand the correlation between stories, ending with, “It is time for the Hellenists – as well as for scholars in other disciplines that have borrowed these categories from the Greeks – to free ourselves from this fragmentary view of oral story and to operate with an inclusive category of the oral story, whether we wish to call it mythology or something else, and however we may wish to divide it up into genres” (Hansen 1983). There is a usefulness to these stories no matter how they are divided, to understand the most out of all available aspects allows for humanity to teach themselves and others the useful parts of mythology and folklore.

### **Useful Teachings**

The article “Using Greek Mythology to Teach Game Theory” demonstrates the positive effects of using popular Greek mythology to teach game theory, a concept used heavily in the business world to understand choosing the best possible decision out of multiple to dominate an opponent. “Greek myths are still studied thousands of years after their creation primarily because they represent fascinating characters in complex situations, and remain interesting and relevant to the human experience” (Miller 2002). This supports the claim for using Greek mythology to teach game theory and how it is a more than reliable platform to teach and proves to be

interesting in the present. The topic segues to “separating equilibrium,” in which in any given situation a person is either a type A or type B, although some people may act as type B to avoid work or responsibility.

There are ways to generate truth from a person to see if they are truly type B or attempting to deceive others. This is a common situation that has occurred throughout history and an example is provided, “Consider a simplified version of Spence’s model where there are two types of workers, those of high productivity and those of low productivity” (Miller 2002). The example discusses how employers want workers with high productivity levels rather than those of low productivity levels, although some people would lie and claim to be a more desirable high productivity level type just to secure a job. Stipulations would be added as there are ways of identifying a person's productivity level, one being their performance in school and if they graduated from college. These stipulations provide more insight as to which type of worker a person is without accepting what they inform. This is directly related to the myth of Odysseus, where he was thought to be the insane type rather than the sane type in hopes to avoid going off to war. While everyone believed him at face value, Palamedes did not believe this and thus generated a way to gain truth by using Odysseus’ son. Palamedes would throw the child in front of Odysseus hoping he would stop plowing before running over his own child, “Palamedes, relying on a sane Odysseus’ emotional attachment to his son, created a separating equilibrium, forcing Odysseus to reveal his type” (Miller 2002), stating that only a sane man would stop before murdering his own child or murder his child to cover the lie while an insane man would continue on and kill.

A new part of the story is Odysseus' wife, Penelope, who holds a contest for men wanting to take her hand after Odysseus does not return for years. “Penelope declared that to marry her a

man would have to string Odysseus' bow and use it to shoot an arrow through twelve axe-heads" (Miller 2002). The story goes on to prove that no man could do so except for Odysseus himself who was in disguise and competing. This directly correlates to students "Being able to use the bow seems analogous to being able to pass college exams" (Miller 2002), as Spence's model has two types although both can complete the task the same way and create different results.

"Similarly, in Odysseus recruitment both types of Odysseus could have killed his son. The cost of killing the son was too high for an Odysseus, however. In Penelope's bow test it would have been impossible for men of 'low' quality to properly use Odysseus' bow" (Miller 2002), as the worker that graduated from college can receive the same career as the worker who did not, the outcome for graduating is higher as the pay of the career will resemble that. In relation to this the article tells a new story of evolutionary biology and how it is used as a signal to others.

In the known world animals have different defense mechanisms in case they are in danger, although some such as the Gazelle have signals they portray to an enemy to warn it of what is to come. "An explanation for this behavior is that the gazelle is signaling to the cheetah that the gazelle could easily outrun the cheetah. Thus, the cheetah should not waste its energy trying to hunt the gazelle" (Miller 2002). This is put in the context of a gazelle jumping 18 feet in the air when startled by a stalking cheetah. "If the gazelle consumes less energy jumping then running away, then jumping is an evolutionally sound strategy" (Miller 2002), exemplifying the strategy of jumping so high to warn the cheetah the capability of the gazelle. This directly correlates with the Greek myth of Dionysus as he was a god captured by pirates. While his captors attempted to restrain the god with ropes thinking he was a mortal prince, the ropes fell off without reason. "The pirates' helmsman properly recognized that their prisoner must be a god and warned his shipmates, who ignored the sign" (Miller 2002). The helmsman would go on to

be the sole survivor as the god would use his power to destroy the ship and transform into a beast in front of the crew. While sparing the helmsman, Dionysus would punish the rest not by death but by transforming them into dolphins, “Trying to kidnap and tie up a god, if one is ignorant of his divinity, does not merit punishment. But failure to recognize a truth-telling mechanism – well, that warrants loss of one’s humanity” (Miller 2002).

“In the previous models a player might have been ignorant of his opponents’ type, but he always knew his own. It’s possible, however, to develop models where a player is uncertain even of his own type” (Miller 2002). This would be recognized as ‘The Theory of Industrial Organization’. Rather than knowing what type each is before the halfway point of the game they play, they must wait until the halfway point to recall the decision made during the game and determine what type they are from there. In correlation, the myth of Atlanta is a myth of a beautiful woman with athletic capabilities greater than the average man. While in search for a man to marry, Atlanta creates a race in which if a man can beat her she will marry and if they could not they would die. Atlanta would go on to race many men until she was attracted to one and he beat her. He wins by using beautiful golden apples produced by the goddess Venus, and this causes a moment of self reflection as to what type Atlanta is more resembling. Atlanta lost because she picked up the apples rather than complete the race. “When Atlanta picked up the apples she proved to herself that she was really feminine and thus would be better off losing the race” (Miller 2002).

The next game covered is the Beer/Quiche game which consists of two players, one who is either type A or type B while player two is a singular type with no variation. Player one knows this about player two while player two has no idea what type player one is. Player two attempts to understand who player one is “Before deciding whether to challenge player 1 to a fight, player



2 observes what player 1 has for breakfast. For breakfast, player 1 must either eat quiche or drink beer” (Miller 2002). The two options of quiche or beer help player two understand who they are going to challenge as both options correlate to what type player one is. In correlation to this is the story of Achilles who was sent to hide on an island in disguise as one of the king's daughters rather than be sent off to fight in the war. Odysseus would be the only one to not believe that Achilles was not female but rather the male type in disguise. To test this, rather than use quiche and beer, Odysseus uses weapons placed in reach of Achilles and a battle horn blowing to see Achilles reaction. The reaction is as predicted, the natural born warrior grabs a weapon immediately “This comment to Achilles can be seen as Odysseus telling Achilles that by grabbing his weapons he made a mistake and revealed his type and thus he should give up his pretence” (Miller 2002).

This is followed by an explanation as to why Achilles would reach for a weapon, as he is a great warrior who acts on natural instinct at the sound of battle although if he were a woman, he would never reach for the weapons. Achilles would be subjected to a term known as imperfect recall, “When a person has imperfect recall he forgets some of what he previously knew” (Miller 2002). The player claims that he forgot his previous intentions and acted out of pure nature. The article concludes that using Greek mythology to teach game theory is valid. “Many Greek myths concerning truth-telling are consistent with economic theories of human behavior, and economics instructors should exploit this similarity by using stories from classical Greek mythology to teach contemporary game theory” (Miller 2002). Mythology and folklore can be used to assist in teachings other than businesses, and this can be proven through understanding traditions.

There is a great misconception about the term folklore, as most would believe it to be stories of others journeys and battles. This idea of folklore is a weighing problem on society today, “That such an idea is so widespread is one of the most regrettable consequences of our century’s civilization” (Pius 1953). The article “The Importance of Folklore” explains that folklore’s true meaning is that “In a society that ignores its healthiest and most fertile traditions, folklore strives to make it maintain a living continuity with the past, not a continuity imposed by outside forces, but one resulting from the profound feelings of generations, which have found in folklore the expression of their special aspirations, their beliefs, desires and sorrows, their glorious memories of the past and their hope for the future” (Pius 1953). This is as opposed to folklore being something that shapes itself around the popular thoughts and actions of society. It instead affects the popular thought and actions of society by reminding the world of where it started and the traditions that allowed it to evolve. To exemplify this, the author describes how man is uprooted from where he may reside and placed in new environments and distanced from those he once knew in order that he may retain financial assets rather than be helpful in a way that best fits the personal description and needs of the individualized person. This is the progress of humanity, men do what is easy rather than what is best or what makes a suitable amount of money no matter the help or harm done to everything around. While instead folklore is on the competing end of the spectrum stating that the same man should instead do what he knows and stick to healthy traditional values rather than lose spirit and create depressing emotions by chasing money. In speaking of the concept of the new world-machine effects on humans, the authors states “It too easily creates artificial pleasures, egotistical and banal, ready-made pleasures that demand no effort or initiative and that turn the individual inward toward himself rather than outward toward society” (Pius 1953).

Folklore displays variations of traditions through stories that naturally express emotion through legends, games, and other grand events. “People remaining in permanent contact with the harsh realities of life often instinctively possess an artistic sense with which, using simple materials, they succeed in rising to great heights” (Pius 1953). This argues against those who believe in the false fantasy of following short-term pleasures such as money. Rather than following those pleasures it is more favorable to act for long-lasting enrichment of pleasure through folklore and the heritage that it describes. “But it must not be forgotten that in Christian countries, or in those which were once Christian, religious faith and the people’s lives formed a unity comparable to the unity of soul and body” (Pius 1953). This provides an example of how understanding the heritage and acceptance of it through its folkloristic nature creates unity through each aspect of man. Next, the author poses the question, “Today, where such unity is lacking or where faith has become weak, can popular traditions, deprived of their vital principles, be maintained or renewed, even artificially?” (Pius 1953) The current world is heavily divided on many fronts and this correlates to the behavior of man as the same aspects of life that can be united through the works and understandings of folkloristic values can also be distant. Comparing these acts to that of other civilizations, there would be some described as united through not only understanding and accepting their folkloristic values from past ages but also accepting current times and events and allowing the old views to shape the new moments for a manifestation of united serenity of adaptation. It would be understood that it is not others job to direct the lives of one another rather to just show them what life could be and allow each person to make their own decision to accept or not to accept, “May you be able to understand fully the whole scope of your social role: to give men, saturated with amusements which are very often false and mechanical, a taste of recreation rich in the most authentic human values” (Pius 1953).

The bottom line is to work on yourself before others as a social construct that one must help others before helping oneself. “At the same time you are making yourselves better qualified to appreciate the distinctive aspects of other cultures, to discover their inner meaning and to perceive in them their original qualities” (Pius 1953). There are many ways to show others, although one that has been proven to be effective in teaching is to follow the original concept of storytelling. Although this is an act that is not effective through oral communication in the growing society, and is in need of a change to better communicate.

### **Evolving Through Entertainment**

The next article is “A Course on Classical Mythology in Film ” It is captured through the thought processes and experiences of Professor Clauss of the University of Washington, as his teachings pertain to the direct correlation between classical mythology and film. The article states that while words have always been a great way to move people emotionally while also causing them to act in certain ways, the twentieth century has brought the popularity of film. Film offers a way to not only share the same words but to show a physical representation of them so that the audience may have a better understanding and continue to share attention. Professor Clauss continues, “My approach to the subject is straightforward: I treat the films we view as texts that are to be set alongside select ancient versions of the myths” (Clauss 1996). Claiming that there are points of focus that allow determining a better correlation between film and myth it would be listed as “...(1) the universality of the individual myths and myth in general, something that becomes even more evidence when the plots have been recast in modern settings; (2) the artistry of the ancient and modern versions (in particular, themes and symbols employed by the artists and comparison of the various directors’ approaches toward their stories); and (3) the *Weltanschauung* of the ancient writer and the director and / or screen writer(s) and its

articulation in their works" (Clauss 1996). As these points of focus are explained it also explains the pairing of films and stories to show a correlation to the story of Hercules and the many versions of writings and films created after this hero. It explains to students that although the characters are similar in most depictions of the story, the story changes depending on where it was told and in what time period it was told in as the people of each had different perspectives and beliefs that the last or than the next will have. As in sometime periods like the nineteenth century most depictions of great heroes, such as Hercules, could involve a great deal of passion and battle against patriarch to reflect the popular culture of that time, "Hereafter, we return to a contrast between a man of brawn ... and a man of brain ..., and again the style of each film differs sharply: spaghetti epic set in post-Trojan War Italy versus impressionistic romance set in post-WWII France" (Clauss 1996).

Through Professor Clauss's teachings and study, it is easier to understand the correlation and effect that both mythology and film/entertainment have on one another. It is not only easier to grasp but also, "Not surprisingly, students respond more viscerally to the combination of myth and film than to a reading of the myths themselves, no doubt, pace Aristotle, owing to music ... and spectacle" (Clauss 1996). The article by Professor Clauss concludes by mentioning titles of other works that provide examples through film and novels.

The article "Folklore Studies and Popular Film and Television: A Necessary Critical Survey" begins by recognizing the correlation between folklore and cinema, how folklorists recognize the correlation as well stating, "At one level folklorists are able to observe and trace the process of homogenizing cultural expressions through the mass media" (Koven 2003). While also stating that "Yet, still other folklorists have noted further areas for fruitful exploration of popular cultural text, such as how popular culture texts reflect contemporary belief traditions,

ethnographies of fan culture, the rituals involved with popular cultural consumption, narratives about technology and technological industries, and the existence of multiple versions of seemingly fixed texts” (Koven 2003).

The following would discuss how within cinema animated cartoons would be the best in terms of displaying folklore and mythology as it was easier to bring the creatures to life when animating them rather than physically constructing them. The most notable being Disney, as many stories would gain popularity through work created by Disney. Although with the growth in popularity there would be problems along the way such as some peoples opinion on Disney and their version of the folklore or mythology they would attempt to recreate, “Sayer accused him of: 1) lack of respect for the “integrity of original creations”; 2) “manipulation and vulgarization” of text for his own ends; 3) lack of regard for the “anthropological, spiritual, or psychological truths” of folklore; 4) “fixing his mutilated film versions in books which are cut to a fraction of their original forms”; and 5) “illustrations of those books with garish pictures, in which every prince looks like a badly drawn portrait of Cary Grant; every princess a sex symbol” (Koven 2003). This led Walt Disney to change some of the definitive text and artistic styles of some characters but not their stories. As it would seem the purpose was not to fully copy the original folklore or myth but instead use recognizable aspects and characters, and then change details to better fit the message intended in the production of the film. “We might potentially call any film folkloric, but true folkloric films are made by trained folklorists or were made in close consultation with folklorists” (Koven 2003), so as not to assume that all films pertaining to fairy tales are the result of a folklore or mythology but instead just stories that may use the same character or characteristics as those films. It was a popular act by many to recreate a story that was based from folklore or a folklorist adaptation of one, while not pertaining to anything about

the original folklore rather than a character. An example of this would be Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, "Another point Sayer raised was that these films frequently sanitize the narratives to be so inoffensive as to be almost meaningless. "Sayer argued that Disney 'sweetens' or removes the conflict in folklore that allows children to learn the 'tragic dimension of life, the battle between good and evil, between weak and strong ... [and] ... all that is good in the human spirits" (Russo 1992:21) " (Koven 2003).

A genre other than children's animation that is dominant in the creation of folklore and mythology films is horror. "This genre appeared to be the one place, next to television advertising, where the magical worldview that the Marchen purports could exist without being questioned in a secular context" (Koven 2003). Horror films are notably the one genre that recreates noble and horrifying creatures from folklore or mythologies and it is accepted without repercussion as it creates the chilling and frightening effects of watching horror films. Horror films were not the first films to recreate folklore or myth as they would sometimes be the recreated version of an already remade story. An example of this is the correlation between the commonly known horror film *Carrie* and the story of "Cinderella" "The horror story about a young girl who discovers her own telekinetic abilities on the eve of her highschool prom is told as a modern variant on the traditional Marchen" (Koven 2003). The correlation is made between the term prom and ball, the terrible motherly figures both main characters endured, and the use of the "Ugly Duckling" story in which the main character is perceived as less although is later recognized as more. In another example, the folktale of the "bosom serpent" is recreated "He summarized the bosom serpent story thus: "through some unfortunate circumstance or act of carelessness ... a snake... is accidentally ingested by, or grows inside the body of, the unlucky individual, where it remains until it is expelled or in some way lured out of the victim's body,"

(Koven 2003). The folklore that the bosom serpent originates from is best recognized in the story of the film *Alien*, by Ridley Scott, in which alien larvae are ingested until they grow and then erupt from the chest cavities of their poor victims.

Horror films are often the best way to display creatures from folklore and mythology while also displaying the actual story, since not all stories are built around a hero who saves the day. Most folklore and mythologies feature failing main characters who die or lose sanity to teach the young or others a lesson on what not to do or the consequences of some actions. The stories themselves were gory and violent and almost impossible to recreate in children's animation or cartoons.

A discussion of which films are true folklore follows and a list is created to recognize which films are “true” folklore. The list states, “From this point of view, a ‘true’ folklore item consists of 1) a traditional text (whether composed of verbal, nonverbal, or mixed components), 2) a traditional performance of that text in 3) a traditional audience” (Koven 2003). This leads us to the contemporary studies in which films began to be made to better suit the audience, “In addition to these variants, different national film boards require different degrees of censorship and editing of films for public display, based on the community standards of the groups where they will exhibit the film” (Koven 2003). This led to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and its categorization of films from “G” to “R” ratings.

As the film industry grew in popularity over the decades, fandom and audience studies began to emerge and weigh on the decision making of films’ creation and purpose. “In America people do not attend the media as isolated atoms, but as members of groups which select among the media and interpret their messages ... Similarly, people go to the movies in groups – especially teenagers who make up such a large proportion of the audience – and formal and



informal fan clubs are of course a way of organizing these groups... People do not read in groups” (Riesman 1970).

The creation of film revolves not around the eye of the creator but rather it is molded around the satisfaction of the audience. The stories of folklore and mythology were told in new ways as to begin to ignore the origin and focus of the aspects that are favored of the story so that more attention would be drawn. In support to this claim “Elizabeth Bird summarized the interest fan cultures have for folkloristics: “If audience members are seen as active in helping to shape the way popular culture is created, they become much more comparable with folk ‘audiences’ (Koven 2003).

In the view of the industry, having people involved in the film as much as they are is a good thing. It allows the film to grow in positive ways for the audience and expand on stories, while in the genre of horror the audience would begin to feel real fear again through the creation of a story displayed as the closest thing to reality. Many felt during the time that original folk or myth was created and shared, it was through that time's imagination and view that the stories could be told and affect the people they were shared with as they were meant, which correlates to the same way these stories are shared through the creation of film in modern day. The audience has a voice and uses it to share insight on how the films affected them. The audience is especially known to voice their opinions on not only films but television series as well, especially in modern times.

To understand how strong the effect of American western mythology has had on the entertainment industry, the American television series “Breaking Bad” was studied in relation to mythology through the article “The American Western Mythology of Breaking Bad” Although the show was popular, “One might object that mobster films with their notorious lineup of

godfathers and bosses seem the most obvious genre of inspiration for *Breaking Bad*, because, after all, Walter White (Bryan Cranston), the highschool teacher, ends up becoming a crime lord, and he fathers two characters, Jesse Pinkman (Aaron Paul) and Walter White, Junior (Roy Frank Mitte), and that forms a central theme" (Brown 2017). Walter White goes from being a highschool teacher to becoming a crime lord through the production and sale of crystal meth and he earns a fortune after learning he has cancer that will most likely kill him. In relation to this story, "*The Godfather* series (the first of which appeared in 1972) created and then polished the seductive parent-criminal archetype, which, in the words of *Slate*'s Alessandro Camon, represents fatherhood as "all important" it largely says "It was the source of authority, the reason for loyalty, the call of responsibility.

It was the crucible where hard choices are made, and character tested. The words itself – 'godfather' – evoked not so much 'the man who sponsored a child's as 'the father who is godlike" White's transformation into a successful criminal is similarly highlighted by the gradual construction of a myth of power and indestructibility. White becomes Heisenberg, a reincarnation of a past genius, as well as a calculating murderer" (Brown 2017). To better understand the correlation between American western mythology and the series. It is first explained that the term mythology refers to the significance of culture from past ages in its use. In the western era of American history, it was common and widely popular for people to be outlaws and challenge authority by taking the law into their own hands. This ideology would influence the story of characters greatly as they would become outlaws for personal gain. Although it resembles the western era it is claimed that it did not fully resemble it; "Additionally there is at least one Western myth that *Breaking Bad* does not challenge and that it positively disseminates: faith in the power of justice" (Brown 2017). The location provides the first

resemblance to the style of show “Breaking Bad” embodies. It takes place in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the American wild west.

This is a place where law is enforced although resembles how loosely it is followed just as did the prime era of the American west. “The Western has often been regarded as a simple-minded affirmation of the doctrines of Manifest Destiny and the unalloyed benefits of progress, but as Pippin has argued in *Hollywood Westerns and American Myth*, the truth is that the classic Westerns have often expressed a tortured attitude about change and development” (Brown 2017). It is stated, in support of the correlation of characters, that “The old order embodied in the authoritative older cowboy is depicted as strong but hard and morally questionable; the new order, symbolized as the adoptive rather than biological son, is typically good but weak” (Brown 2017), when referring to characters Walter White and Jesse Pinkman.

The mythology of this story is that the young would follow the lead of the old, potentially taking over the reins for the old wise cowboy although through the teachings learn how to be in charge in their own way that is still wise and beneficial. To demonstrate the progression of the chain of command being passed down from generation to generation although each new generation has a new mindset in place of what to do next. This is the progress of American western mythology as in the old west it was common that progression would occur as times would change, while these progressions would not stray far from traditional values they would alter the civilization enough to allow for a community progression into new age, “Such a progressive myth is fitting to the optimism of a country such as the United States” (Brown 2017).

Transitioning to another version of a similar story with the same ending result, of “Another common variation of this plot is to pair an inexperienced, fatherless boy, often of uncertain parentage, with a grizzled old mentor who guides him to adulthood whilst undergoing

dangers of various sorts out on the range" (Brown 2017). This version, while being another way to view the same story of *Breaking Bad*, is also in direct correlation to American western mythology as it was common in the time frame that children would grow up without both parents or parents at all and would find an older figure to teach them and guide them no matter the route of life they choose to follow.

There are many other adaptations of this concept, and whether choosing law or outlaw the result it always the same, the young take on the mantle but not without going through hardship and trauma although it builds their character and is layout of what made them into the leader they would become after the passing of the mentor/older figure, "The relationship between Walter White and Jesse Pinkman in *Breaking Bad* reflects the customary tensions between father and *adopted* son characters common to the Western genre" (Brown 2017). An example of this relation would be made in the moment that Walter requests Jesse to murder someone to produce the industry they built as to teach him the lesson of what must be done in order to succeed. While also teaching him to change his way of excitement in order to stay under the radar of the law and rivals.

In common American western myths, the younger generations would be wild and reckless without consideration until the wise older figure would teach them the ways of being successful while being conscious and aware of their behavior and actions. This would lead to the main part of each story and adaptation as the young men would learn through failure and hard work such as a moment in the series would exemplify "Thus, because Pinkman never learned his chemistry well enough to understand the properties of hydrofluoric acid, he puts a decomposing body in a bathtub. The acid eats through the tub and the second floor of the house, and the corpse lands on the first floor in a disgusting pink lump of toxic liquefied flesh" (Brown 2017).

In American western mythology there are times that the older figure, while being as wise as they are, also have times when they learn about themselves through teaching others. This is properly demonstrated in a particular scene “Pinkman’s subjection to and emasculation by White is depicted in this scene, which first reveals White’s concern as he sees the girl he has rolled over on her back begin to vomit, then his hesitation as he considers whether he really should help her, and finally his horrified recognition of the fact that he has allowed a person to die without attempting to help” (Brown 2017), Walter recognized who he had become and what he was willing and capable of doing in order to succeed in his actions. While this is a teachable moment to Jesse of not only what has to sometimes be done it also taught Jesse who he was partnered with while simultaneously teaching Walter who he has become. It would be described that this heartless action caused Jesse to have loyalty to the only person he had left as the other interest was gone, all he could rely on was the mentor and partner he followed every day.

According to the classic guidelines for tragedy, the tragic protagonist need not be transfigured or redeemed; he must only, according to Aristotle’s *Poetics* 2.xv, at least, have noble characteristics and suffer a fall from respectability or renown” (Brown 2017), Walter White's actions in accordance with this are known as “..manly valor” (Brown 2017) where he takes responsibility for his faults or the errors of his ways. His transition from the respectable father and husband he was into the outlaw is the most well-known version of commonly used characters from western lore. “This change, again according to the traditional Western’s formula, happens not because of inherent vice but because of a series of miscalculations or “errors”” (Brown 2017), creating a story changing arc of progression of the characters action and mindset. The change must take place in order to build the redemption whether performed by the same character or the young character being taught. This would transition into the common theme of

most American western mythology, and that is protecting family or the ones you love, as that is where the story built from with Walter needing money for his family and following the rules was not getting him what he wanted.

The article would be concluded with stating that just like in the American western mythology “The series demonstrates that, although the law may be ineffective and love may fail, justice is more enduring than individual lawmakers, lawyers, or lovers. White’s motivation in the concluding episode is purified by the disinterested desire to make his family (who now hate him) safe and secure before he dies and to punish those who have done wrong, including himself. ” (Brown 2017). This representation is common in American western mythology, although it commonly occurs in the result of a sacrifice of some sort in which characters learn from another whose death is inevitable. These moments and stories are connected through the audience as they believe they are emotionally connected to characters after listening about them or watching their journey. This is even more accurate through the youths' emotion, as they are more likely to grow emotional attachment to characters more easily being younger and having a more active imagination.

### **Heroic Storytelling**

Professor Frauenfelder describes in his article “Popular Culture and Classical Mythology”, how students easily associate stories of Greek heroes to film, as the example used is Arnold Schwarzenegger's character in the 1987 hit film Predator that closely resembles Greek myth Hercules. As they both went through great physical battles where they had to use their natural strength and combat experience to defeat inhuman creatures. This was something that was found to be easy as popular culture is a great subject to relate anything to when teaching youth, as popular culture is built and encouraged from their actions and interest, not the interest

of large corporations. "The method does not lead students first to study in a detached way how myth is received or reproduced through the ages, but to recognize that good stories have a profound effect on all cultures and that comparison of similar stories from different cultures can illuminate both sides in ways otherwise impossible" (Frauenfelder 2005).

The stories that last through the ages are the ones that are most popular or used, therefore it would be logical that film industries would recreate these stories for the big screen to draw in more attention and money. Frauenfelder would continue by stating breaking down the idea of greek mythology and film by first saying that "Greek myth at first puts off the average student by appearing on the surface facile and designed for children, yet at the same time alien and incomprehensible, too much to memorize for a test" (Frauenfelder, then following with "Film, on the other hand, is a passionate medium for students; they are natural experts, natural aficionados" (Frauenfelder). Claiming that the reason these students know movies are important is because they have to spend money to view them rather than hearing the story for free within a room of four walls where they listen to everything else, "Film, like myth, is a vivid, story-oriented genre and our most public form of popular entertainment" (Frauenfelder 2005), and as a result of having to pay to watch the films' "As a result, movies are endlessly reflective of our shared values, aspirations, and beliefs, which make us pay to see stories again and again" (Frauenfelder 2005).

The creation of films and movies created a new way to story tell and keep the tradition of sharing myth and folklore alive, "In fact, although many have distanced Greek myth from modern entertainment because of myth's religious character, its literary worth, or its explicative value as prescientific inquiry, mythmakers in the ancient and modern worlds have always had the

same fundamental task: to help a particular audience validate a particular construction of reality" (Frauenfelder 2005).

To help support the idea of the teachings Frauenfelder states that their are guidelines to how to do so; choose american films that are popular or have won awards, do not use films that are based from comic books or video games, do not use foreign films or artistic films that can lose the youths interest, and finally to not use films that are directly related to or studied as retold stories from myths. The examples of retold stories would be of "... *O Brother Where Art Thou* [*Odyssey*], *What Dreams May Come* [Orpheus]," (Frauenfelder 2005). These guidelines would be created to focus on serendipity.

"Like archaeologists who have dug something quite unexpected out of the ground, students experience an indescribable shock of pleasure in discovering that a modern film is filled with elements found also in classical myths, and they come to class eager to share their research" (Frauenfelder 2005). This quote would be followed by a listing of films and their original story found within mythology such as; Star Wars and Independence day to Aeneid Pair, Top Gun and Rain Man to Iliad, Sixth Sense to Odysseus and Orpheus, and more. In comparison to the Hercules and Predator stories it was stated that "The terror-inducing alien combines several traits of traditional Heracleian opponents, traits which students are delighted to uncover. The predator a) has intelligence (Diomedes, Hippolyta); b) shoots missile weapons (Stymphalian Birds); c) has snaky growths on its head (Hydra); d) has a piglike snout and tusk (Erymanthian Boar); e) cannot be hurt with normal projectiles (Nemean Lion); f) is stealthy and elusive, cannot be chased down easily, but can be tracked and tricked (Ceryneian Hind, Boar)" (Frauenfelder 2005).

The connection between the two protagonists from each story is the simple term "uncivilized civilizer", exemplified as someone who is a great warrior stripped from everything



and having to reconnect with their natural selves in hopes of defending or saving civilization. Concluding the article with the statement that students will attempt to create many comparison and contrast between film and myth as the ending, the beast that stands out the most, although it is best that in everyone's interest they look deeper into the film and understand the underlying message the story is attempting to tell rather than to consistently look for physical evidence or resemblance. It is easier to understand the deeper meaning of a story from an older and more experienced person's perspective, although through the eyes of youth this is a harder concept. This is why a lot of films made through the stories of mythology and folklore will target children through animated stories.

Over the past decades Disney has created or recreated stories from mythologies and folklore from various cultures, as discussed in the article "Mythology in Children's Imagination". While all are inaccurate to the original story, it is explained that the stories are this way in the aspect of creating an enjoyable experience and content friendly viewing for the young crowd that they are targeting primarily. The first example being *Hercules*, a commonly known Greek mythological character, although unknown to common public knowledge the Roman version of Hercules is used in the film rather than the Greek while every other character derives from Greek mythology. This was due to the journey being events that take place during Hercules's journey as it may have been potentially bad for children to view. There are examples of stories from Arabian, Irish, Japanese, Mexican, Pacific Island, Chinese, Judeo-Christian, Native American, and Hindu mythology, while there are more examples these are the ones listed within the article.

Emerson asks the question "...are these works mythopoeic?" (Emerson 2019). Mythopoeic literature is defined as writing that either creates a brand new mythology or uses an already existing mythology within new writings transforming the old into something new. The

mythology must also play the most important role within the writing and reflect the theme of the story. This is a concept that Disney does a great job of doing and therefore it is proven time and time again that the films produced are mythopoeic. This concept is followed by a second question “Do these films teach mythology?” (Emerson 2019). The article answers this question stating that there are many aspects within each film that are accurate whether a major part of the story or a small detail within the background (Emerson 2019).

It is stated that most lean towards the term of folklore rather than mythology as the details within the films themselves are not discovered by the average viewer, they are better discovered by those who have previous knowledge of the stories before viewing them. (Emerson 2019) The final question asked within the impact segment of the article is “...what effect do these movies have on young viewers?” (Emerson 2019). This is immediately answered with a statement of these lessons being needed for development of young viewers' minds, as the majority of stories are of a young person falling into traumatic events and being within the world of mythology or folklore. Stating that youth can learn to “... persevere through their own difficulties , but they can also affect a positive change in the world through their own efforts" (Emerson 2019).

The article is concluded with a positive message about the importance of these films/stories and how they can create the next generation of modern day heroes. The author meant to bring awareness to the usage of mythology and folklore within famous films and stories and how even though they are great in developing preferred mindsets/passions within youth, they are not accurate to the original story. The most meaningful aspect of this article would be how the films respect cultures in displaying their mythologies and folklore while also positively influencing the children who view them.

The article advances the theory of influence of mythology and folklore within society and its media throughout decades. These stories date back to some of the earliest recorded times in human history and still hold an effect on the children of today. The article was an easy read due to the topic of the article. Mythology is an interesting topic on its own although when used in relation with Disney movies the level of interest raises. The article was also kept short, to reach all aspects that the author wanted to show while not over explaining information. The expertise on mythology itself was not shown by the author. Although David L. Emerson has more than common knowledge on mythology and folklore, the point of the article was not to prove expertise but instead share knowledge of what has been happening in films produced by Disney. Although the best way to understand what has been happening is not to focus completely on what others do but also what humanity has done as a whole to create these actions.

### **Created Creatures**

Since the beginning of the known human existence, humanity has been recorded performing a singular act more than others and that is the action of personification as discussed in the article "Mythical Monsters". The ability to bring inanimate objects to life, with humanistic characteristics, through verbal actions or physical actions such as through writings or art. There would be two kinds of personifications made; "In one there is a mixture of forms of altogether different animals; as in the case of the Satyr with its human head and body and its goat-like limbs and horns" (Lamb 1900), while on the other hand "In the other kind there is no such mixture, but either something is added to the normal, as in the case of the three-headed dog Cerberus, or something is absent, as in the case of the one-eyed Cyclops" (Lamb 1900). This separation of concepts would create a question on the history of mythology as "The question, however, may be asked whether the so-called unnatural, abnormal forms ever existed, were ever seen by primitive

man, or are invisible at the present day" (Lamb 1900). If the creatures were personified, how much was imagined and how much was truly witnessed?

The question would roam through the mind of the author until the obvious answer would show itself over time, as the answer would be yes the creatures are and were real in appearance. While it would be claimed that in today's world there are many species with mutations that can or cannot be explained, the result being that their appearance is unique in comparison to others of their kind. Providing an personal example it would be recalled that when exploring what people thought to be half bird and half cat was not, although its appearance would deem it so until it was further examined "Examination showed it to be a poor little kitten which in birth had been roughly divided in two behind the forelimbs, and the torn part had been drawn out somewhat pointedly as if by the same force; the part belonging to the hind-limbs was absent" (Lamb 1900). This example would provide an explanation for why these creatures were personified in the way that they were.

"If in this age and in the city of Baltimore and among educated and intelligent persons, unusual animal forms can be interpreted as mixtures of two or more different divisions, why should we doubt that among primitive peoples similar mistakes were made?" (Lamb 1900). A problem with this identification through malformations of animals is that many people will regard the animal as the creation or construction through religious means, causing it to become a familiar concept as to what many may know. A creation that may create a look of horror rather than joy can sometimes be correlated to the acts of the Devil or demonic figures. This would cause fear and panic and result in the execution of people and animals in early stages of life to prevent the reincarnation or presence of evil.

The concept of spiritual or supernatural presence is disregarded by Lamb, and rather the concept is acknowledged as the result of embryology. The problem being that people were more interested and able to keep the myth alive if they believed it to be the result of supernatural work rather than scientific mutations that were observed by people who were unable to properly identify what they had seen. It is the spark of imagination that allows for the myth to live rather than the logical answer that is followed by multiple levels of teachings.

Provided examples of things personified as, now famously known, creatures of mythology “The word *sphinx* is Greek, meaning “one who binds” The Sphinx personified drought – the binding up of the waters” (Lamb 1900). Another example is “The Harpies, with women’s heads and bodies, wings and claws of birds” (Lamb 1900), while commonly known as the creatures that assisted in transporting souls to the underworld after death, “They personified hurtful winds” (Lamb 1900). From this images would be shown on malmutations of living organisms, one of a child with their feet joined together up to their hips that is labeled as a Siren as it relates a half fish half human, a bunny with two heads but one body, and a small child with a singular eye. Each of the images are mutations in the genetic build of the individual organism that enhance the idea of the creatures existence, although only because of the lack of scientific discovery, “Probably every one has seen what is called hare-lip and cleft palate, two malformed features which often coincide ; indeed there would be no difficulty in producing a monster on this basis” (Lamb 1900). It does not take much to spark the idea of a monster when noticing a physical difference presented on a person or animal, the problem being the lack of knowledge as to how to treat and identify the being.

Mankind believes that there is reason for everything that has existed and everything that still exists, through the spread of this is the explanation as to why people are so quick to

associate one thing with another; "Man had some experience and observation of lighting-stroke and the tempest, and could think of them only as controlled by some great being up in the air ; and hence we have Jupiter with his thunderbolts, associated with the mountain-tops, the eagle, and all that is high" (Lamb 1900).

It is human nature to believe that there must be a reason for the creation and action for everything on this planet as humans know no difference to compare their own thoughts to. There has yet to be another intelligent life to communicate with that may assist in understanding anything. Thus through the thought process of man, mythology and folklore grew as in the earliest age they were able to rationalize actions in nature and the look of unnatural things. The great size of a hairy man, or that of an abnormally large bull, that roamed one specific island and terrorized any and all that resided on the island would grow into stories of fear or potential adventure. This particular story would be listed as that of the origin of the first spotted Minotaur, a creature that stood tall with the body of a man but the head of a bull, and the strength to compensate for the stature.

An example would be of the mountain top that was within the clouds and unreachable by man, mainly because of the lack of knowledge as how to survive a climb that was so high; "A mountain-top pierced the clouds. This suggested mystery. The gods must live up there ; so high Olympus was regarded with great awe" (Lamb 1900). The creation of mythical creatures or lands came from the lack of knowledge of what was truly being observed or seen from afar, and the lack of knowledge as to how that sight or creation came to be. The stories would build on each other as passed from one to the next although they were famously known for shaping life. A story of a half man and half bull would prevent many from entering the land, as they would fear what they could not understand or were unable to get a clear look at themselves "Optical

Illusions ... When an enemy on horseback swooped down over a hill at twilight, the man and horse might easily, in a panic terror, be regarded as one duplex beast, – a Centaur" (Lamb 1900).

The fear of creatures that were stronger, faster, more agile, and more gifted than man can cause many men to change their behavior or actions. As to guide them into a religious path as the creatures would be labeled as creations of the devil or gods that did not favor man due to their appearance or what they had power over. Some myths created adventurers who were able to set sail and discover new lands and resources that proved to be better for the evolution of mankind. The common theme was that the stories were always in circulation of humanity and no matter how they were viewed, they helped define the actions, traditions, and beliefs of that culture.

With the knowledge that the world has now, mankind believes it to be easier to understand the description of what brought terror, venture, or built the reputation of some great warrior from the past, as man today would state "It was suggested that the harpies of mythology might have had their origin in fables of the large vultures of southern Europe, and that mermen and mermaids were evolved from seals which strongly resembles men when briefly seen swimming with their heads above the water" (Lamb 1900).

The question resides if mankind is right in the assumption or belief of what we thought to have seen so long ago? There is still the argument of what is real and a mutation as the common topic of current date creatures such as "BigFoot" and "The Chupacabra," both have scientific explanations and supernatural support. The creatures in the current date are no different than the ones in previous, although man continues to assume without knowledge, preventing and causing actions in their lives such as; dedicating years to adventuring mountains, forest, swamps, and tundras in search; seeking religious help or answers; being prevented from venturing out at certain times or in certain areas of the world; and more. It just is not yet recognized because it is

the current date and not history yet. While the stories of beasts that terrorize men and women affect them through history, there are other stories that hold great weight on the actions of man. On the more enjoyable side of myth and history are the acts performed for powerful beings.

### **The Olympic Tradition**

The article “The Essence of Sport” begins with a clear statement of its purpose, as to reconnect where sports originated from and for what purpose. As all sports combined, it stands as one of the most viewed versions of entertainment. Reznik claims that sports have lost their purpose over time and people have forgotten the history “In Ancient Greece, sports served as means of communication with gods” (Reznik 2017). “Throughout human history, sacred time has been interconnected with sport, but also with religious celebrations and rituals” (Reznik 2017), making the claim that athletes follow a different time than that of other humans. The time that athletes follow is that of the game in which they have prioritized their time and abilities to. The time spent to compete in the games and train for is the time passage that they follow, although the creation of the games does not reflect on today's sports “The ancient Greeks celebrated Gods during sacred time by organizing the Olympic Games” (Reznik 2017). Although it must not be mistaken that the games were created for the gods but humans enjoyed the viewing of them as well, as “In Antiquity, individuals were able to overcome their everyday life, their worries, and their utilization pursuits through sport” (Reznik 2017).

The Olympic Games were not performed only in Ancient Greece, as they took place across the world although they would follow different names and be performed on different days or times as to correspond to what was thought to best suit that culture's god. The Olympic Games were not even the original games created for entertainment nor for the pleasuring of the gods, that belongs to taurobolium. This was the original game that involved the sacrifice of living



creatures as in humans or bulls although not much is known about the acts performed. While these acts are looked at differently in later times it must be understood that the times and collective thoughts of people were different. "Sport was, in addition to festival, a part of social life" (Reznik 2017), gathering together to view and celebrate the games was under the supervision of the gods and it was the way of life in a time that gods held control over. "In a society organized around religiously motivated stories, i.e. myths, games were of course of heroic origin" (Reznik 2017), people participated in dangerous games as not only to compete and prove themselves to others and the gods but in their eyes the games were a representation of the gods themselves "The heroic myths related to the Olympic Games are mostly based of narrations of the divine actions of gods which mortal humans also took some part" (Reznik 2017).

The heroic story of Zeus is what led to the creation of the Olympic Games, as the story goes Zeus was hidden away from his father Cronus so that he may not be eaten like his siblings were. Then after years of hiding he would return strong and face his father, leading to his victory in defeating the previous king and take the throne himself while releasing his once devoured siblings from the stomach of their father. The return of Zeus would mark a great day for everyone therefore "When the Cretan Heracles entered Olympia, he thus organized the games in the honor of the welcoming of the new ruler on Mount Olympus and in the memory of being protected by the Cretans" (Reznik 2017). Those who participated in the games were held to a higher status than any other man, as they were considered by some the closest to being gods, and by others opinions they were gods themselves. This would lead to the recognition of not only those who were victorious but also those who were defeated. This is still a practice held today, as those who participate in the Olympics are held to a higher athletic status than that of any other

athlete or person. No matter if the athlete wins or loses they are always respected and acknowledged for being so above all that they could participate in the Olympics.

The Olympic Games ceased to exist for a short amount of time during the Trojan War, although would begin anew some time after to recapture the cultural benefit. The restart of Olympic Games came with new additions “These were, for example, *pentathlon*, *diaulos* (running in two phases, around three hundred and eighty-five meters), *pankration* and the race of house carts” (Reznik 2017), although with the new additions came losses. “For example, the race called “*apene*” or mule cart. The reasons for canceling this race were typically Greek; because the races of mules were not aesthetically pretty, and the events had not originated in ancient times” (Reznik 2017). This was a period of adjustment since women were viewed as non-equals and were not allowed to participate and in some instances could not enter arenas. Although there is the story of one woman who began to change the viewership of women in a small amount “This woman, whose husband was dead, disguised herself completely as a man – a trainer – and guided her own son to victory in the races in Olympia” (Reznik 2017). The woman exposed that she was a female trainer and instead of receiving the punishment she gained respect as the last two generations of men, and her son, had won the olympic games. From that day on no trainer could enter an arena without getting completely undressed so this would not happen again. When most people believed that the reason the competitors wore little clothing was to give them a movement advantage it was actually that “Pausanias uses this story to retrospectively explain the nakedness of the participants of the games” (Reznik 2017). It was a solution to the fact that only men performed in the games. Rather than continue to fight the rules created by man, “Women and girls also had their own games in Olympia” (Reznik 2017) and rather than honoring Zeus in the games they honored Hera (Zeus’s wife).

The downfall of the games is a consequence of humanity becoming more and more interested in payment and recognition rather than pride in a once religious right. “Once the purpose and meaning of the Games is forgotten, the Games are brought to their end in their original sense, even if they technically continue to exist” (Reznik 2017). This was a change in the Olympic Games as people cared less and less about performing and cared more about winning and the benefits that followed, “The Olympics cease to be sacred for people and are transformed into a formal matter. And thus, each athletic performance, no matter how superb, becomes only a statistical entry and after some time, it is necessarily overcome and forgotten” (Reznik 2017). The article concludes that sports today are no longer performed as a reflection of the gods but are still important to humans. In today's world, “Sports is a means for overcoming one’s own profane life and living through sacred time” (Reznik 2017). Athletes are still athletes and sports continue to prove this, although the purpose of sport and the meaning it once held has changed.

### **Conclusions**

Mythology and folklore have proven to influence human behavior, popular culture, and modern media in both positive and negative ways. Through various forms of entertainment, as the transfer of the knowledge is through the act of storytelling, as through history the ways in which mythology and folklore are shared evolved to better suit that of humanity. It began from the earliest times of acting out stories, to sharing them verbally, then back to demonstrating them through physical actions such as theatrical performances, then to the more modern way of cinematography. Although the art of storytelling has evolved, the accuracy of the story itself has been lost or dismissed, whether that be through the examples of children's animations or through the great Olympic games. The meaning is still hidden within the acts although it is not as bold in

meaning. This proves to be effective toward the minds of people in modern society, as times have changed the dedication to the old gods and wonder of great adventures have been lost. To recover these meanings and traditions would be proven to be beneficial to not only the people of modern society but to the people of the future, as this is proven through the teachings and how those teachings can prepare and improve future success in many forms. The teachings of mythology and folklore were exemplified through the world of business and ancestral appreciation in many cultures.

To know where one originates from and not just view a vague account of the past allows humans to understand past actions in ways that are beneficial to life as proven by our teaching history over many generations. Although the negative aspects of rebuilding a once abandoned religious following could prevent progression. The unquestioned dedication to the gods and monsters of mythology and folklore caused the deaths of many. This would prevent more exploration of the subject due to fear equal to admiration. Is it right to deny the teachings and acceptance of mythology and folklore in a traditional and historical sense, or does the world accept it as such and embrace it in the same ways as other religions and traditions? The answer to this question is yes, as mythology and folklore play a major role in the humanities, history and the evolutionary growth of mankind. We must accept this carefully so as not to create conflicting opinions or beliefs. People today are sensitive to change so information must be brought together through the teaching of anthropology to give a full understanding of the history before sharing it with the world. Only then can it be displayed honorably and beneficially.

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