

## **The Role of Mythology in Contemporary Literature: A Descriptive Study of Selected Film**

**Yachna Suryavanshi,**

Asst. Professor, Department of Humanities, Graphic Era Hill University,  
Dehradun, Uttarakhand India, 248002

### **Abstract**

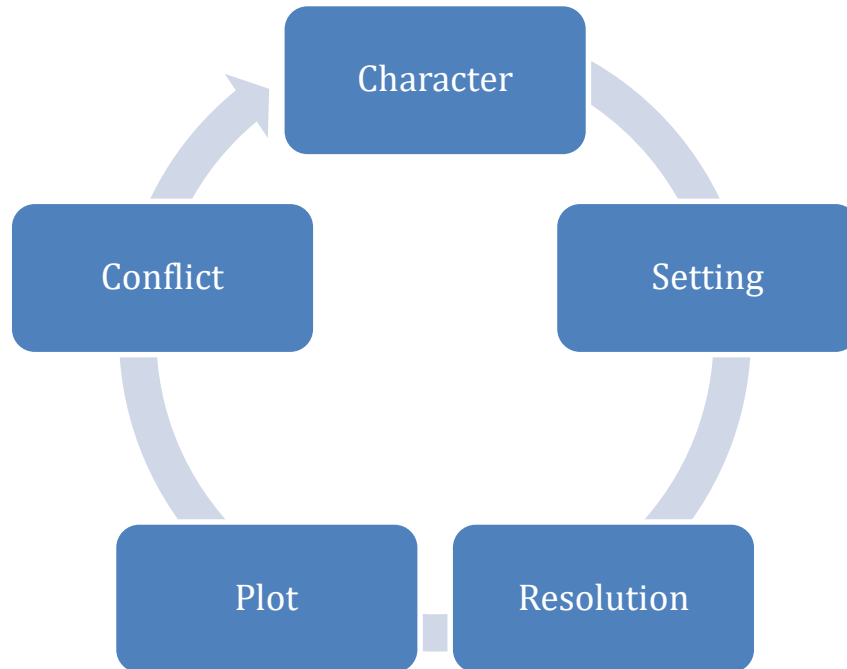
This study adopts an analytical approach to explore the place of mythology in modern literature. Storytellers have traditionally turned to mythology for inspiration, and it has had an enduring impact on writing. Mythology has recently become more relevant in modern literature, particularly in the field of movies. This research examines how mythology is used to convey complicated topics and develop gripping tales through a careful selection of films from various genres and civilizations. This study sheds light on how modern filmmakers employ mythology to pique audiences' interest and hold their attention by evaluating the use of mythological components including archetypes, symbols, and motifs. The movie selected for study is *Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*. The results of this study help us comprehend the mythological genre's lasting influence as a tool for narrative in modern literature and film.

**Keywords:** Contemporary Literature, Film, Greek, Mythology, Percy Jackson

### **Introduction**

Since ancient times, mythology has been a fundamental part of human society and narrative. With its rich tapestry of archetypes, symbols, and stories, it has enthralled audiences of all ages. Even though mythology has typically been linked to ancient societies and religious doctrines, it has a strong presence in modern literature and, more specifically, the film media. In recent years, mythology has been a more popular source of inspiration for filmmakers, who use its ageless components to construct gripping and emotional stories. This study aims to investigate the function of mythology in modern literature, with a particular emphasis on the chosen film. The use of mythological aspects can be found in a variety of film genres, from fantasy and science fiction to drama and even comedy, and contemporary literature spans a wide range of genres and themes.

This study intends to demonstrate the versatility and capacity of mythology to cut over different genres and cultural barriers by providing a descriptive analysis of a few films that demonstrate its use. The ability of mythology to evoke universal themes and emotions is one of the main reasons why it continues to be relevant in modern literature. Mythological tales frequently examine basic human emotions like love, loss, bravery, and the search for meaning. The audience has a shared bond thanks to these overarching themes, which enables them to empathically relate to the characters and stories. Modern filmmakers can create a timeless quality and access the collective consciousness using mythological motifs, profoundly and permanently affecting audiences. A vital part of mythology, archetypes, symbols, and motifs have deep resonance and significance. Archetypes stand for fundamentally recognizable and comprehended human characteristics and behavioral patterns. Filmmakers can develop characters that emotionally connect with audiences by using archetypes like the hero, the mentor, or the trickster. Figure 1 presents the key features of the Mythological Genre Literature:



**Figure 1 Key Features of the Mythological Genre Literature**

On the other hand, symbols and motifs act as visual and thematic anchors that give a movie more layers of meaning. The meaning of mythological symbols like the snake, the tree of life, and the labyrinth goes beyond their literal readings. The intertextuality seen in texts involving mythic notions adds layers of meaning and resonance that appeal to both the casual viewer unfamiliar with the mythological source material and the more discerning viewer. This study seeks to impart knowledge regarding the influence mythology has on modern story structure and audience engagement through an examination of the ways in which filmmakers use mythological aspects in their works.

### **Literature Review**

Mythological characters appear in contemporary books and films with a vigor that belies their age. Pan continues to live in the forest, Icarus keeps ascending, Daedalus keeps up with his artifice, and Ovidian metamorphoses are unceasing (Workman, 1981). *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* was released on February 12th, 2010. The author of the New York Times bestselling *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* series, Rick Riordan, wrote the novel from which this film was produced. His books are historical reworkings that fuse the current period with historical myth (Hartatik, 2011). The tradition has been carried on by Riordan. Rick Riordan does not presume that his readers are familiar with all myths and their historical backgrounds. He doesn't even assume that his audience is familiar with all the Olympian deities. By writing about the gods in the modern context, he is attempting to pique their interest in the writings of antiquity. Here, reception theory is relevant since his readers will already be thinking of these tales while reading the old texts. There are times when it seems as if Riordan adapted the personalities of the gods from the Iliad. Other times, the god is so drastically altered by the ways we live that they are nearly impossible to recognize (Swanson, 2014).

Through the close reading of the scenes, it is observed that the gods of Mount Olympus appear to have entered Percy's life from the pages of his Greek mythology books even though it is the 21st century. Realizing that Poseidon, the sea deity, is in fact his biological father, Percy now understands that he is a demi-god who is half human and half god. The powerful gods of Olympus are fighting, and this could

spark a global conflict. To avert a terrible war between the gods, Percy meets two more demigods: Grover, his companion, and protector, who is a satyr, and the warrior Annabeth, who is looking for her mother, the goddess Athena. He also encounters Luke, the arrogant demigod, Hermes' son who is incredibly skilled in combat. Luke offers his shield and flying shoes for assistance. Percy must save his mother, Sally, from the depths of hell itself, and rests at the conclusion of the quest. Along the way, Percy encounters Medusa, the famous Greek mythical figure, the woman whose eyes can turn anyone into stone (Hartatik, 2011).

Dionysus, the god of winemaking, is one of the figures that Riordan has altered significantly in terms of characterization. Dionysus is still portrayed as a party animal but is forced to sit somberly at a heroes' camp as retribution for pursuing a nymph. However, it is appropriate that these gods have evolved to match our conception of who they ought to be. It is also true that since Homer, the definition of a hero has evolved. It comes as no surprise that Riordan can incorporate ancient myths into our various cognitive processes because he is well-versed in mythology (Swanson, 2014). The Olympians in the movie value family far more than their prehistoric selves did. Hermes explains to Percy that although being a godly father is difficult, it is ultimately worthwhile to be a part of a family. The gods still do not get along in Riordan's reality despite all this emphasis on how important family is. The ideal example is Athena and Ares. At the camp and on Mount Olympus, there are two opposing forces. These aspiring warriors on the battlefield will be led by their kids as they engage in a game of 'Capture the Flag' between opposing teams. On Olympus, there is disagreement over whether to attack Kronos directly or not. They can no longer choose to live independently, nevertheless. Even their most ferocious adversaries should cooperate, according to Riordan.

In this way, the movie tries to include elements present in the mythology and alter them according to requirements. They also seek to present the values that can be absorbed through the understanding of mythology. The movie features a number of Greek mythological characters, items, and concepts. As a result, the movie gives a lot of attention to Greek deities, monsters, and other tales. Magical creatures, like the Minotaur, which is a large beast that is half man and half bull and was birthed by Pasiphae, the wife of King Minos of Crete, and a bull that Minos was given to sacrifice to the gods. Furthermore, in "The Lightning Thief," when Percy's substitute instructor assumes the appearance of the winged, toothy Fury in the back room of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Percy first learns that something strange is happening to him (Bouchard, 2013).

Another significant example is the movie *Thor (2011)*. *The Handbook of Norse Mythology* by John Lindow, which includes tales of Norse mythology and its characters, is a book to contrast with the movie released by the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The stories in this book help readers comprehend the personality, knowledge, and mystique of Odin. Characters also get to compare the presentation of brothers Thor and Loki in contemporary cinema in contrast to Nordic myth. The exposition of the range of potential uses for mythology in contemporary literature ends with this. Every reading has shown that myths serve to create specific premises and to elicit the right emotions both within and outside of the literary work. This paper should also have two purposes: it should theoretically stimulate further discussion about a fascinating yet complex aspect of folklore and mythology for those of us teaching folklore in literature departments, and it should practically provide a useful framework for organizing courses on the subject (Workman, 1981).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this descriptive study has clarified the significance of mythology in modern literature, especially in the selected film. The results underline the lasting value of mythology as a source of ideas and a narrative framework in contemporary storytelling. It is clear from the analysis of the film that mythology has several uses in modern writing. First, it offers a rich tapestry of archetypal figures and timeless themes that speak to audiences from many backgrounds and eras. Heroes and gods are examples

of mythological characters who embody common human experiences and tribulations, allowing viewers to have a powerful emotional connection to the stories. Second, mythology provides a framework for delving into difficult concepts and philosophical theories. Filmmakers are able to explore existential issues, morality, and the nature of reality by integrating mythical elements. These tales provide a symbolic language that makes it easier and more enjoyable to communicate important facts.

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