

Mythological Identity Essay

PROCESS 20 pts

Commentary

Prewriting Efforts	2 points	N.M.I.	C.U.I.	AVG.	GOOD	SUP.
Drafting, Conferencing	15 points	N.M.I.	C.U.I.	AVG.	GOOD	SUP.
Evaluation	3 points	N.M.I.	C.U.I.	AVG.	GOOD	SUP.

(NMI= needs major improvement; CUI= could use improvement; AVG=average; GOOD=good; SUP=superb)

PRODUCT 80 pts

1. Assignment Fulfillment	10 pts.	N.M.I.	C.U.I.	AVG.	GOOD	SUP.
2. THESIS	10 pts	N.M.I.	C.U.I.	AVG.	GOOD	SUP.
3. SUMMARY	10 pts	N.M.I.	C.U.I.	AVG.	GOOD	SUP.
4. ANALYTICAL	10 pts	N.M.I.	C.U.I.	AVG.	GOOD	SUP.
5. ORGANIZE	10 pts	N.M.I.	C.U.I.	AVG.	GOOD	SUP.
6. PERSONAL	10 pts	N.M.I.	C.U.I.	AVG.	GOOD	SUP.
7. PHRASING	10 pts	N.M.I.	C.U.I.	AVG.	GOOD	SUP.
8. GRA./SPEL.	10 pts	N.M.I.	C.U.I.	AVG.	GOOD	SUP.

EXPLANATIONS

1. A catchy title has been created. A catchy intro has been provided. The paper is around 1000 words. General paper-formatting conventions have been adhered to.
2. A well-crafted thesis is discernable; it is phrased well, and explained such that the core value or understanding of the myth is presented.
3. The summary of the M, D, S , is clearly represented, flavorful, and streamlined.
4. The analysis behind the M, D, or S is expressive, flavorful, and reflects critical thinking.
5. The essay flows well due to strong organizational structures such as P.I.E. structures and transitions.
6. The personal appeal/understanding behind the myth or symbol is strong.
7. Phrasing throughout the piece is original, inventive, playful, or risk-taking.
8. The paper's overall meaning is not impeded by grammar or spelling errors.

STRENGTHS

OPPORTUNITIES TO GET AHEAD: / PENALTIES

Submission to Spectrum, other contests	Submit?		TENTATIVE GRADE
PERMANENT INFRACTION			LETTER GRADE CONVERSION

Will there be permanent infractions applied to the piece? Yes NO

If yes, justification: _____

late poor process lack of conferencing other

MYTHICAL IDENTITY ESSAY WRAP-UP

Revisions: In my class, you will be accorded the chance to revise; in my class, revision is highly-recommended.

Why should you settle for anything LESS than your VERY-best? You should ideally make some time to meet with me individually; these meetings are to discuss how to best go about revising your paper. You should consider revising even if you have received permanent grade infractions on your final draft. I am not a "hard-ass" teacher. I do, however, believe in this concept: "Great writing is rewriting."

THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS ESSAY

By nature, a myth is a story, often about gods and heroes. A legend is a myth that may have some rooting in historical fact. For example, there may have actually been a King Arthur, a Britano-Roman soldier, who, with his uncle Dubricius (the archetype for Merlin), fought against the Northern tribes with his knights. And yet the real trick behind mythological inquiry is to see the deeper intertextual and archetypal roots behind these stories, stories about seemingly grandiose and greater concepts that abound in the world. Myths are all around us—find them.

Ultimately, my motivation in having you write this first essay was to make you perceive that the world we live in is a world permeated by myths, symbols, and dreams. Language is a symbolic artifice to many individuals, in that it creates different concepts to arise between people; by its nature, then, language can be seen as a destabilizing factor that often mars our attempts at communication. Nonetheless, since we cannot go around painting up our faces and standing on Kalakaua Avenue miming every concept we'd like to convey, we use words to convey our meanings to each other. This act in itself is frustrating and liberating at the same time. (I don't like mimes and clowns, by the way).

Part of my own interest in mythological inquiry is to recognize that there is no finite limit towards interpreting a myth or a concept. Myths and symbols have cultural contexts that change. In a comic book, *Blade of the Immortals*, the comic's writer had to explain that his use of the 'manji,' a symbol traditionally used in Buddhist iconography, was in no way related to the 'swastika,' nor was he advocating any of the ideals represented by the 'swastika.' And yet the swastika was clearly patterned after the manji and appropriated by Hitler's propaganda team as a symbol of change and dynamism.

Or we might consider the curious case of the Holy Grail. Long thought to be the sacred chalice used by Jesus at the Last Supper, the literal grail has now been made into a symbolically more challenging image, that of the divine feminine. Dan Brown's adoption of many of the controversial claims in *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* and his intimating that Mary Magdalene and her womb is the true archetype behind the Holy Grail sent shockwaves through various religious communities; the controversy fattened Mr. Brown's bankroll.

Symbolic inquiries abound in our personal lives. After eating a large helping of pizza and washing it down with soymilk shots (I am lactose-intolerant), I had a very bizarre dream involving the Swiss Family Robinson treehouse, a drunken Judy Garland slobbering about the place, a phosphorescent lightbulb on the fritz, and a malformed circus clown named Vernon. Arguably, despite any investigation on online dream interpretation, I still haven't the slightest clue what to make of that dream—the only thing I do know is that it might be a good idea to purchase digestive aids such as Lactaid and consume them prior to eating a large meal involving dairy products.

Being more aware of the mythological, archetypal, and allegorical structures may not necessarily help you to fill out your 1040 tax returns this April, balance your checkbook, or play in a jazz quartet, but I think the real benefit of having more of a mythological awareness lies in the ability to see connections from all TEXTS as having a rooting in other texts, such that literary allusions can make more sense. Or perhaps there is a greater enrichment and understanding from film that might be derived. Someday, by retelling the stories that we know best to our own children, we might be reproducing the same intrigue we had as children for those same myths and stories.

My grandfather once told me stories about the richest man in Honomu, the time he judo-flipped a man who stole his file, a story about an angry father who would often throw pieces of shrimp at his idiotic son, and now that my grandfather has since passed on, I can slowly feel these stories beginning to slip like water through a sieve of my memories. The main plotlines are still there, but the details... the details and the delivery in which he told me these myths about his own experience and outlook on life—I can't seem to pick up on those, and only a year has passed since his death.

I challenge you to think very deeply about the types of myths you are cultivating in your daily life. I challenge you to make your own archetypal actions worthy of exaggeration, worthy of respect and admiration. It can be a story about how you survived a Saturday shopping at Costco. Or how about a grandiose Trojan War to use the restroom after a 3.6 hour long Peter Jackson film?

I challenge you to think about your life as one gigantic myth, one that will be interpreted and debated, long after you are gone. I challenge you to critically analyze and assess all the things you believe in and to never be satisfied, complacent in that understanding.