

G-Star School of the Arts
9th Grade Pre-IB English Summer Reading

Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*

All students in Pre-IB English I need to read Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* before the first day of school. Our first unit is on myths and the heroic cycle, so you will be using the information from this book in class. Also, this assignment will be your first project grade. In addition to the summer work, you will also have a test on the book during the first few weeks of class and will need to have read the entire text.

Why read Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*?

Greek mythology is so frequently alluded to in literature across time periods and throughout western culture that being familiar with the stories and characters will help you better understand the texts that you will read throughout high school and beyond.

Materials Needed

I recommend getting your own copy of Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* as we will be interacting with this text in class (and you will probably find it useful throughout your high school career). If getting a personal copy isn't possible, it is widely available in libraries.

You may type your assignment if you wish, but it is not necessary. Make sure to bring it with you on the first day of school.

Archetypes

An archetype is a recurring character, symbol, or situation that is seen across times and cultures and seems to represent universal ideas present in human thought.

Some examples:

Situational Archetypes

1. The Quest- describes the search for someone or some talisman which when found and brought back, will restore balance in a community, land, health, etc.
2. The Task- a superhuman feat that must be accomplished in order to fulfill the ultimate goal. Specific test of challenging actions.
3. The Journey- sends the hero in search of a truth. The journey includes a series of trials and tribulations. Usually descends into a physical or psychological "hell" that he/she has to come out of to restore justice, harmony, peace, etc.
4. The Initiation- a moment, usually psychological, in which an individual comes into maturity and gains a new awareness that they should "get involved."
5. The Fall- descent from a higher state to a lower because of some flaw of the character.
6. Death and Rebirth- Someone or something dies but is accompanied by a birth or rebirth.
7. Good vs. Evil- the battle between good and evil.
8. Unhealable Wound- A wound that cannot be healed-- could be physical or psychological.
9. The Magic Weapon- a weapon that the hero NEEDS to defeat his enemy.
10. Supernatural Intervention- God/Goddess/Gods/Aliens/etc. come in to help the hero.

Symbolic Archetypes

1. Light vs. Darkness – Light represents hope and renewal. Darkness implies the unknown, ignorance, or despair.
2. Water vs. Desert – Water is life-giving.
3. Heaven, Earth, and the Underworld – There may be places that humans are not supposed to visit or dwell (i.e. Heaven/Hell, etc.)
4. Haven vs. Wilderness – Many times there is a safe place where the hero can rest.
5. Fire vs. Ice – Fire typically represents knowledge, life, life, and rebirth where ice represents ignorance, darkness, and death.

Character Archetypes

1. The hero/heroine – Usually fulfills a task and restores harmony to the community.
2. Young person from the country – Character taken away as a young child and raised by strangers.
3. The initiates – Young heroes who endure some training and ritual.
4. Mentors – Serve as teachers or counselors.
5. Father-Son conflict – could result from separation during childhood or tensions between adults.
6. Group of companions – willing to face any number of perils in order to be together.
7. Loyal Retainers – Sidekicks to the hero who are supposed to serve/protect the hero.
8. Friendly Beast – often assist the hero and represent the hero's connection to nature.
9. The Devil Figure – May offer goods, fame, or knowledge to the hero in exchange for his/her integrity or soul.
10. The Outcast – someone who has been banned from a community.
11. Earth Mother – Symbolizes abundance and usually provides spiritual, physical, or emotional nourishment.
12. Father God – Often associated with the sky and/or sun. Can be a just patriarchal figure but can also be a vengeful god who punishes.
13. The Temptress – Female figure whose physical beauty may be the downfall of the hero.
14. Damsel in Distress – Female figure in need of rescuing. She may also be used as a trap.
15. The Star-Crossed Lovers – Engaged in a love affair that is fated to end in tragedy for one or both due to disapproval of society, friends, family, or the gods. (like *Romeo and Juliet*).
16. The Creature of Nightmare – this monster, physical or abstract, is a manifestation of humanities greatest fears. Often has humanlike features that have been changed to make the creature horrifying.

Assignment

As you read *Mythology*, you will choose **four (4)** of the myths in the book for your analysis. For each myth, you will write a **one paragraph summary** of the myth and identify **three of the archetypes present**, using the text to support your choices. It doesn't matter how many you use from each category, but you may only use each archetype one time for all four myths. **Your explanation must be 3-5 well-developed sentences.**

You may type or handwrite your work. If it is typed, please make sure to use Times New Roman 12pt font. If it is handwritten, please make sure it is legible and on lined paper.

Example:

Sleeping Beauty (Disney Version)

Summary:

In this folktale, a beautiful princess is born to a king and queen. However, after they neglect to invite an evil fairy to a feast, the fairy curses the child to be killed by pricking her finger on a spindle on her 16th birthday. However, the three good fairies cast a spell that will only make her sleep until awoken by "true love's first kiss." However, her parents also burn every spinning wheel in the land and send her to go live in the forest with the three good fairies, and she is never told that she is a princess. Just before her 16th birthday, she meets a handsome young man named Phillip, but that day the fairies tell her that she is a princess and take her to the castle. While there, she is tempted by the evil fairy to prick her finger on the spinning wheel and falls asleep. The good fairies then cast a spell which makes all of the people in the castle to fall asleep. Then the evil fairy kidnaps Phillip to prevent him from kissing the princess. The fairies then stage a rescue to liberate Phillip and give him a magical sword to kill the evil fairy who is now turned into a fearsome dragon. Phillip defeats the dragon, kisses the princess, everyone wakes up, and they live happily ever after. (Your summary may be shorter than mine as I was trying to wrap up an entire movie.)

Archetypes:

Hero: Prince Phillip is clearly the hero in this story. He has to undertake a quest to restore the community of the kingdom which is plunged into perpetual sleep and to rescue his "one true love." In order to do this, he has to go against the evil fairy in the form of the dragon. After winning the battle, he restores order to the kingdom and gets the reward of marrying the princess.

Light vs. Darkness: Throughout the story, the evil fairy is associated with the color black. Even her minions are black dogs and a black raven. In contrast, the princess is named Aurora after the dawn and is said to have hair like strung gold. In the end of this story, the darkness is vanquished and the light (Aurora) is free.

Young Person from the Country: In *Sleeping Beauty*, Aurora is threatened by the evil fairy, so the good fairies offer to foster her. They take her into the forest where they don't tell her of their magical powers or her true parentage. Because of her unassuming upbringing, she is very innocent and didn't grow up to be a stereotypical "princess" but, instead, is very humble and pure.