

Greek Mythology and the Modern Day Superhero

Mr. Holder • January 17, 2018



When we use the term “Greek Mythology” we are referring to the body of religious and cultural beliefs held by the ancient Greeks and Romans (~2000 BCE - 300 ACE) and their tales of the great deeds of gods, goddesses, and heroes.



“There are no new stories. Only new ways of telling them.”

– **Christopher Booker**

In this slideshow we will explore how modern day comic book superheroes are reimaginings of gods, goddesses, monsters and heroes from ancient mythologies.

The Seven Basic Plots:

(all stories follow one of these 7 basic plots)

1. Overcoming the Monster
2. Rags to Riches
3. The Quest
4. Voyage and Return
5. Comedy
6. Tragedy
7. Rebirth

"This is the most extraordinary, exhilarating book." EAY WELDON

THE SEVEN BASIC PLOTS

Why we tell stories

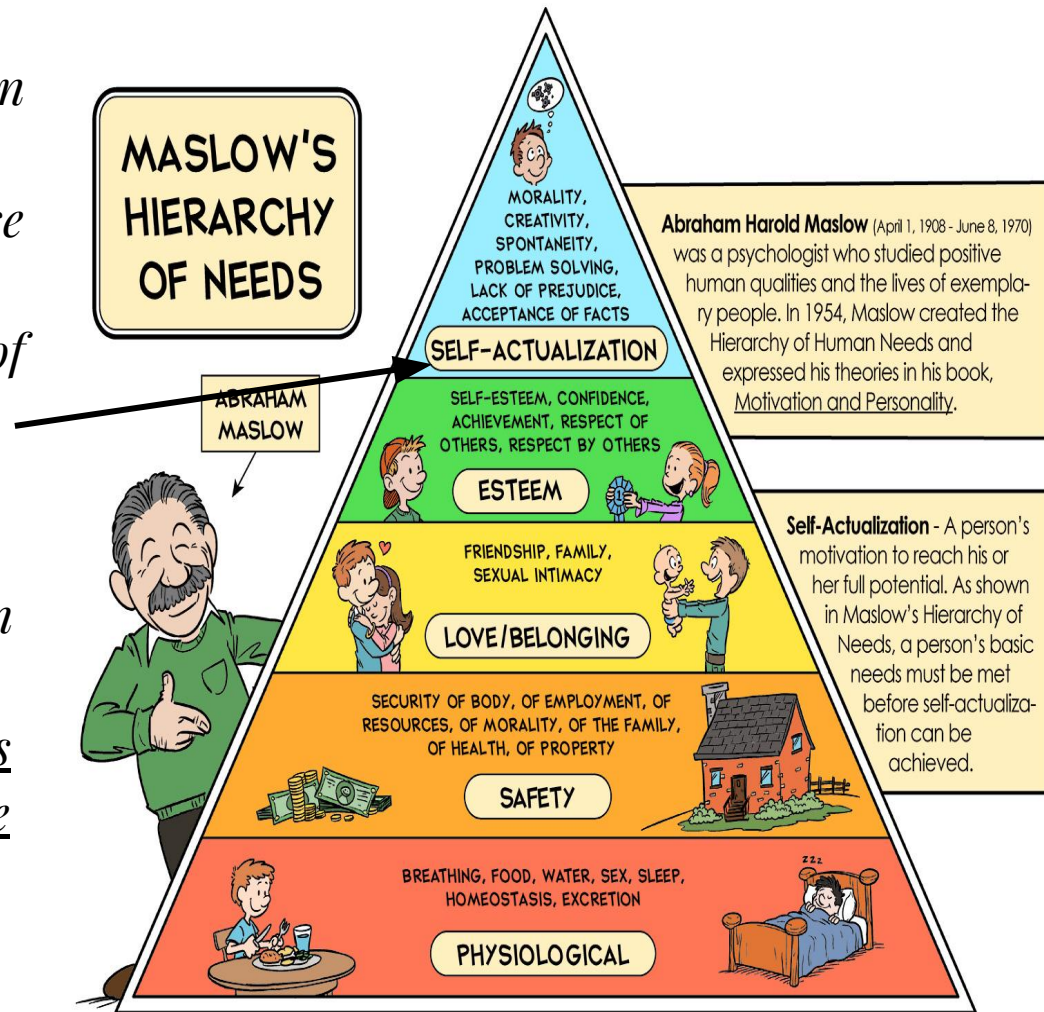


CHRISTOPHER
BOOKER



"However many characters may appear in a story, its real concern is with just one: its hero or heroine. It is he/she with whose fate we identify, as we see him/her gradually developing towards that state of self-realization [self actualization - Maslow] which marks the end of the story. Ultimately it is in relation to this central figure that all other characters in a story take on their significance. What each of the other characters represents is really only some aspect of the inner state of the hero or heroine themselves."

-Christopher Booker



The Myth of Perseus

The myth of Perseus is one of the most famous myths in Greek culture. It recounts the adventures of Perseus, the half son of Zeus, who killed the gorgon monster Medusa (a creature so hideous that anyone who looked at her would be instantly turned to stone.) Perseus defeated the Medusa by using the inside of his shield as a reflective surface to cut the Medusa's head off without having to look at her directly. Perseus then put the head of the Medusa in a bag and used it as a powerful weapon to defeat the Kraken, a gigantic sea monster sent by Poseidon to destroy the city of Argos.





Mercury & The Flash

Mercury was the Greek god of travelers and mischief. He was the son of Zeus and the goddess Maia and was known as the messenger god. Mercury wore winged sandals that allowed him to move faster than any god or mortal.

The DC superhero The Flash is inspired by Mercury. Like Mercury, The Flash was known as the fastest man alive. He was fast enough to sometimes time travel and was even proven to be faster than Superman. The creators of The Flash gave him a humorous, mischievous and joking personality just like the god Mercury.





Hercules - Half son of Zeus and a mortal woman; demigod; had incredible strength and labored to save others.

Hercules is the inspiration for the modern day superhero Superman!

- Both are orphans sent to live among humans by their parents.
- Both have to choose whether to live a selfish or unselfish life and whether to use their powers for good or for evil.
- Both are the strongest individuals in their time (Superman originally could not fly, but could only jump great distances due to his strength.)
- Both wore clothing that was special and symbolic to him (Hercules wore the Nemean Lion; Superman wore the blanket he was found in as a cape.)
- Both sacrifice themselves for the good of humanity and use their great strength to save others.



Superman (Kal-El) - Last surviving being from the dying planet Krypton, Superman is sent to earth by his parents and becomes incredibly strong from our yellow sun.

Not so Imaginatively...

Wonder Woman the Amazonian is, not so imaginatively, based on the tribe of fierce warrior women from Greek mythology known as the Amazons.

Wonder Woman comes from Themyscira, an island from Greek mythology that is hidden away from the eyes of mortal humans.

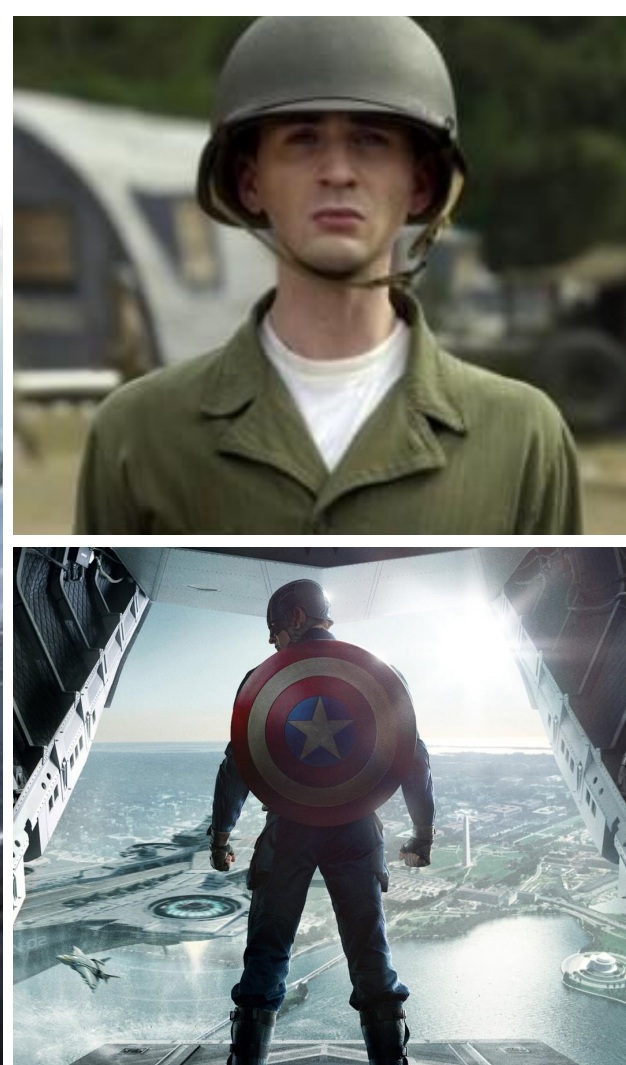
Princess Diana of Themyscira, Daughter of Hippolyta (aka Wonder Woman) receives her powers as a blessing from Olympian deities:

- The strength of Demeter and Gaea
- The wisdom of Athena
- The eyes of Artemis
- The spirit (fire) of Hestia
- The speed of Hermes
- The beauty and love of Aphrodite



Hercules & Captain America

Captain America could be regarded as a super patriotic Heracles. As Heracles had his shield that embodied events of the Olympics, Captain America has a shield that embodies the country he fights for. Heracles is the only human that became a god, and had to go through many demeaning tasks and suffer a great deal of pain before becoming a god. The same goes for Captain America. Before becoming a superhero, he was a weakling that was often made fun of. He was shorter than the average male, a lot weaker than average, he got picked on and beat up by bullies, he was generally embarrassed and demeaned as Heracles was. And then when he was injected with the formula that gave him superhuman capabilities, he was put through an immense amount of pain. In this way, he suffered pain during his final ascension, just as Hercules did. (GRST 202 Blog)





Sun Wukong (The Monkey King) from Chinese and Taoist mythology.

The Monkey King vs. Beast Boy

Sun Wukong, also known as the Monkey King, is a monkey born from a stone who acquires supernatural powers through Taoist practices. Sun Wukong possess immense strength, is extremely fast, and knows 72 transformations, among other abilities.

Beast Boy, whose human name is Garfield “Gar” Logan, contracted a rare disease called Sakutia when he was a child. His scientist parents, in an attempt to save his life, inject him with a serum from a West African green monkey. The serum saved Gar, but had the unintended effect of turning Gar’s skin, eyes, and hair green, and granting him the ability to metamorph into any animal that he is familiar with. Later, Gar will go on to become a young superhero joining various superhero teams like the Teen Titans.



Beast Boy, Garfield “Gar” Logan from the DC universe.

Nobody sums up better than Wonder Woman...



The End!

Any Questions?