

中国矿业大学教材建设工程资助教材

希腊罗马神话鉴赏

Culture Understanding of Greco-Roman Mythology

主编 李冠杰



中国矿业大学出版社

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前 言

一、编写背景

希腊罗马神话是西方文明的重要源头,对西方语言和文化的形成与发展起到了非常重要的作用,对欧美社会生活亦有深远影响。英语语言中许多字词和典故都来自希腊罗马神话,掌握一定的希腊罗马神话知识,无论对提高英语阅读能力,还是加深对西方文化的理解,都大有裨益。

有鉴于此,编者在数年希腊罗马神话公选课教学经验的基础上,以大学英语拓展课和英语专业低年级学生为目标读者,编撰了这本《希腊罗马神话鉴赏》教材。

二、教材特色

1. 理念先进,突出学生的学习主体地位

教材设计以“内容依托教学”(CBI)理论为指导,围绕“翻转课堂”教学模式,以输出为驱动,突出学生的主体地位。教材通过真实、地道的语言材料,为学生提供具有层次性的高质量语言输入,作为语言输出的素材;同时通过精心设计的教学活动和练习,引导学生进行有效产出,达到学习语言和内化知识的目的。

2. 内容系统完善,融故事叙述、文学鉴赏和文化解读为一体

希腊罗马神话内容浩繁复杂,从教学实际出发,编者集中对诸神部分进行了系统呈现,旨在为学生构建希腊罗马神话知识体系、进行课外延展阅读提供帮助。教材内容结构完整,形式生动活泼。教材在遵循通用英语阶段语言学习规律的基础上,通过学习材料和活动设计提高学生的语言实际应用能力,增进学生的文化理解力,从而实现工具性和人文性的有机统一。

3. 建设配套的在线教学资源支撑平台

“翻转课堂”教学模式,客观上要求学生在课堂外进行相关教学内容的学习。为此,我们在编纂这本教材时,也同时进行了与教材配套的在线教学资源支撑平台,并将教材内容与网络平台相关内容编制了二维码,为学生的课外学习活动提供了丰富明确的内容和方便快捷的路径,满足泛在学习的需要。

三、教材结构

教材首部分为整体介绍,简要阐释了希腊罗马神话的概念和学习希腊罗马神话的意义。后续内容按体系分为五个大部分,共十二章。其中每一章节都分为三个部分:概述(Introduction)对该章节神话知识进行系统梳理,帮助学生掌握神话知识脉络、构建神话知识体系;流行神话(Popular Myths)包括一至两个情节完整、语言生动的神话故事,帮助学生对话话有初步认识;延伸阅读(Further Reading)则收录同一故事的不同版本、文化对比和经典阅读等。

四、使用建议

本教材倡导课堂教学与自主学习相结合的混合式教学模式,在设计上充分考虑了传统课堂和翻转课堂两种需求。对教材每章节的前两个部分“概述”和“流行神话”,编者在内容难度和字数方面都做了控制,使用教师可以按照翻转课堂模式布置学生在课前自学,也可以按照传统教学方式在课堂讲授。在教材每章节的第三部分“延伸阅读”中,编者收录了同一故事的不同版本、文化对比和经典阅读等。同一故事的不同版本能让学生体会多元的表达方式,提高学生的输出能力;文化对比主要介绍与希腊罗马神话相对应的中国神话和圣经神话相关部分,引导学生树立多元文化意识,构建合理的人文知识结构,并在此过程中提高自身的语言技能;经典阅读中节选了《变形记》、《伊利亚特》、《奥德赛》等西方文学经典,使学生得以浅尝文学经典的魅力,提高语言能力及英语文学素养;延伸阅读部分在翻转课堂模式中是指定不同水平程度的学生学习不同的内容,达到“因人而异”的教学目的。在传统教学模式中则可让学生按兴趣自行阅读学习。

五、编写团队

本教材共分12章,滕敏负责1~4章,李冠杰负责5~10章,杜光明负责11、12章,李冠杰、Anthony Newton负责统稿。在教材的编写过程中,英籍专家Ross Falkingham给予了无私的帮助和指导。

《希腊罗马神话鉴赏》顺应大学英语教学改革而生,从筹划到定稿历经两年,期待能为大学英语拓展课的教学贡献力量。因为教材为全新编写,编者水平有限,难免有不足之处,欢迎各位专家、老师和同学在使用过程中批评指正。

编者

2015年9月

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Introduction—Why Greco-Roman Mythology

Why Study Greco-Roman Mythology?

If no other knowledge deserves to be called useful but that which helps to enlarge our possessions or to raise our station in society, then Mythology has no claim to the appellation. But if that which tends to make us happier and better can be called useful, then we claim that epithet for our subject. For Mythology is the handmaid of literature; and literature is one of the best allies of virtue and promoters of happiness.

Without a knowledge of mythology much of the elegant literature of our own language cannot be understood and appreciated. When Byron calls Rome “the Niobe of nations,” or says of Venice, “She looks a Sea-Cybele fresh from ocean,” he calls up to the mind of one familiar with our subject, illustrations more vivid and striking than the pencil could furnish, but which are lost to the reader ignorant of mythology. Milton abounds in similar allusions. The short poem *Comus* contains more than thirty such, and the ode *On the Morning of the Nativity* half as many. Through *Paradise Lost* they are scattered profusely. This is one reason why we often hear people by no means illiterate say that they cannot enjoy Milton. But were these people to add to their more solid acquirements the easy learning of this little volume, much of the poetry of Milton which has appeared to them “harsh and crabbed” would be found “musical as is Apollo’s lute.” Our citations, taken from more than twenty-five poets, from Spenser to Longfellow, will show how general has been the practice of borrowing illustrations from mythology.

It is believed that this presentation of a literature which held unrivalled sway over the imaginations of our ancestors, for many centuries, will not be without benefit to the reader, in addition to the amusement it may afford. The tales, though not to be trusted for their facts, are worthy of all credit as pictures of manners; and it is beginning to be held that the manners and modes

of thinking of an age are a more important part of its history than the conflicts of its peoples, generally leading to no result. Besides this, the literature of romance is a treasure-house of poetical material, to which modern poets frequently resort. The Italian poets, Dante and Ariosto, the English, Spenser, Scott, and Tennyson, and our own Longfellow and Lowell, are examples of this.

It is an additional recommendation of our subject, that it tends to cherish in our minds the idea of the source from which we sprung. We are entitled to our full share in the glories and recollections of the land of our forefathers, down to the time of colonization thence. The associations which spring from this source must be fruitful of good influences; among which not the least valuable is the increased enjoyment which such associations afford to the American traveler when he visits England, and sets his foot upon any of her renowned localities.

In reading these romances, we cannot fail to observe how the primitive inventions have been used, again and again, by successive generations of fabulists. The Siren of Ulysses is the prototype of the Siren of Orlando, and the character of Circe reappears in Alcina. The fountains of Love and Hatred may be traced to the story of Cupid and Psyche; and similar effects produced by a magic draught appear in the tale of Tristram and Isoude, and, substituting a flower for the draught, in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. There are many other instances of the same kind which the reader will recognize without our assistance.

The objectives of Greco-Roman mythological study may include the following goals:

To enable the learners, through reading the myths and having fun with them, to gain exposure to some of the major Greco-Roman myths which have shaped western culture and the way western people think;

To increase intellectual maturation and clarification of learners' own values through the study of ideas and attitudes manifested in western myths and through a comparative study with those of our own nation and epoch;

To help cultivate in learners a cultural receptivity by encouraging their critical thinking and cultural reading;

To help learners better understand the enigma we call life through

discussing and evaluating the ways myths shape human consciousness and behavior.

What is Mythology?

The establishment of a single, comprehensive definition of mythology has proved almost impossible. No one definition can satisfactorily embrace all the various kinds of stories that can legitimately be classed as mythology on the basis of one criterion or another. According to Webster's Dictionary, the word "mythology" refers to 1) a system or set of interrelated myths and 2) a systematic study or methodological analysis of myths, particularly their form, purpose, and function. In the text, the term is mostly used in the former sense, and often used interchangeably with "myth" or "myths".

The meaning of the word "myth" is derived from the Greek word "mythos", which means "utterance," "tale," or "story," and that is essentially what a myth is: a story. But such a definition seems too general to be accurate. Myths, in the traditional sense, should include the following aspects; a tale, first told orally; of anonymous origin; set in the remote past, often a vague time outside human chronology; dealing with cosmological phenomena; focusing on the lives and ways of the gods and divine heroes whose adventures represent significant aspects of human experience and reveal the origin and nature of early rituals or customs, and so on. In another word, a myth is a tale that gives a religious explanation to the world as it is. It is a story that has become traditional, explanatory in nature, and expressive of the universal beauties and truths of the human spirit. Such a story is timeless in that the events are symbolic rather than just the way it happened. It need not be told only orally, but may use no words at all as in religious rituals, or be conveyed by various media, individually or in combination, through mime, dance, painting, literature, drama, and film, etc. It is not uniform, logical and internally consistent, but multiform, imaginative, loose and often confusing or contradictory in detail. Moreover, its significance and emphasis can change from one generation to the next, from one nation to another.

It would also be helpful to recognize legend or saga as a category of myth which reflects some historical basis and to realize that some myths share characteristics that we associate with folktales, fairytales, and fables. They are stories of origins. They orient people to the metaphysical dimension, explain the

origins and nature of the cosmos, validate social issues, and on the psychological plane address themselves to the innermost depths of the human psyche. Some of them are prescientific attempts to interpret the natural world. To make sense, they explain the world, making it manageable. Take the primordial pair of gods, Gaia and her son Uranus, the earth and the sky, for example. Uranus, the sky, lay upon Gaia, the earth, and made love to her without stop. The myth can be seen as a symbolic representation of the interplay between rain and soil that makes plants come to life and grow. Aeschylus wrote in his lost *Danaids* that "the holy sky passionately desires to penetrate the earth. . . rain falls and impregnates earth, and she brings forth pasturage for flocks and Demeter's life-giving corn". For another example, the myths worldwide in which human beings are fashioned from clay satisfy our need to know how and why we came to be here. Despite the fact that the wonderful creation of human life and the constitution of human body is still sort of mystery to us, scientific discoveries today about the components of human body have brought us closer to the mythical account of human creation.

Thus, as responses of people to the material and spiritual life in the prehistoric time, myths are designed to explain the causes or origins of natural phenomena and give meanings to traditional practices, such as birth, death and sacrificial rituals. Many myths are of Nature myths or Ritual myths. Stories of gods or heroes descending into the Underworld in the west and emerging in in the east actually reflect the setting and the rising of the sun. Myths in which Goddess Persephone lived for three months with her husband Hades in the Underworld and returned to live with her mother Demeter, goddess of corn, for the rest of the year reflect the return of spring after winter.

There are other stores which tell us about our relationship with the natural world, giving shape to the unfathomable and overwhelming forces in nature. For instance, human relation with Mother Earth, from which we come, and to which we return after death. Also there is the change of seasons which orders human life as it is, and the disastrous flooding and explosion of volcanoes which threaten people's life.

Greco-Roman Mythology

Greco-Roman mythology, also known as western classical mythology, is actually made up of two branches: Greek mythology and Roman mythology,

although that latter was developed out of the former.

In Greek myth, the gods and goddesses are not only personifications of the forces of the universe, they are seen as beings much like common men and women. The term for this is “anthropomorphism”, meaning “in the form of a human being”. This representation indicates a world view that asserts the intrinsic worth, dignity, and divinity of the human being, and demonstrates the principle that “Man is the measure of all things”.

Literarily, Greek people have taken the myths as their principal subject matter for centuries, even during the Dark Ages when Christianity came afore as the predominant spiritual guide to human life. Roman writers like Virgil, Ovid, and Dante reclaimed large territories of the mythological landscape despite its pagan character. Since then, from the Renaissance, the Enlightenment Movement and Neoclassicism, Romanticism, to the modern times, classical mythology has continued to exert itself as a western cultural reference. Mythic images and symbols now are so common that we are often scarcely aware of them.

Today, Greco-Roman mythology is pervasive in western culture, high or low. The planetary system is named after them: the planet nearest to the sun is Mercury, messenger of the Roman gods; then Venus, goddess of love; Mars, god of war; Jupiter, king of the Roman gods; Saturn, god of agriculture and liberation; Uranus, god of the sky; Neptune, god of the sea; and Pluto, ruler of the underworld. The love goddess Venus, whose name is synonymous with beauty, is often featured in song and art. The space mission Apollo is named for the god of music and prophesy. There is a petroleum company whose logo is the winged horse, and Nike, one of the best-selling running shoes brands, is named for the goddess of victory. The list goes on and on, which is a living evident of the pervasive influence of Greco-Roman mythology on western culture.



Reflections

I . Questions for Understanding and Reviewing

1. What's your idea of mythology?
2. What's the connection between Greek myths and Roman myths?

II . Food for Thought

1. Could the following stories be categorized as myths? Give your reasons.
 - A. Kua Fu Chased the Sun
 - B. Shen Nong Tried Medical Herbs
 - C. Huang Di and Yan Di Fought Chi You
 - D. Da Yu Subdued Floods
2. Do you have any example to prove that myths (Chinese or Greek) exist today?

Part I

Origin Myths

Chapter 1 From Chaos to Order

According to the common account, the world was formed out of Chaos. By this, however, we must not understand a huge and shapeless mass, but merely dark, unbounded space. The accounts vary essentially as to how the world proceeded from Chaos. The most popular view is that Gaia (the earth) first issued, in not very comprehensible manner indeed, from the womb of Chaos; whereupon Tartarus (the abyss beneath the earth) immediately severed itself, and Eros (the love that forms and binds all things) sprung into existence.

Gaia then begot of herself Uranus (heaven), the mountains, and Pontus (the sea). The first gods who peopled this new world were begotten of the earth partly by Uranus and partly by Pontus. From her union with Uranus sprung the Titans, the Cyclopes, and the Hecatonchires; from her union with Pontus various sea-deities.

According to Hesiod, the oldest of all the Greek poets, there were twelve Titans; six males—Oceanus, Coeus, Crius, Hyperion, Iapetus, and Cronus; and six females—Theia, Rhea, Themis, Mnemosyne, Phoebe, and Tethys. These Titans doubtless represented the elementary forces of nature. The Cyclopes were three in number—Brontes (thunder), Steropes (lightning), and Arges (sheet-lightning); these refer to the phenomena of the storm. The Hecatonchires (hundred-handed), again, are three in number—Cottus, Briareus, and Gyes. These, too, represent destructive forces of nature—perhaps the earthquake, and the storm-wind.

By Pontus Gaia became the mother of the fabulous sea-deities—Nereus, Thaumas, Phorcys, Ceto, and Eurybia. These deities, again, had numerous descendants. Nereus represents the sea in its quiet state. Thaumas represents to us the majesty of the sea, who is the father of Iris (the rainbow) and of the Harpies (storm-winds). Lastly, Phorcys and Ceto, from whose union the frightful Gorgons proceeded, typify all the dangers and terrors of the sea.

Many marriages also took place among the Titans themselves. The numerous sea-nymphs are descended from Oceanus and Tethys; from Hyperion and Theia come the deities of the light—Helios (sun), Selene (moon), and Eos (dawn); from Coeus and Phoebe the deities of the night—Leto (dark night) and Asteria (starry night). The most important of all the Titans, however, are Cronus and Rhea, who pave the way for the universal dominion of their son Zeus.

Uranus, fearing lest his last-born sons, the Cyclopes and Hecatonchires, might one day seize his power, buried them directly after birth in the deep abyss beneath the earth. This displeased Gaia, their mother, who thereupon prompted the Titans to conspire against their father, and induced Cronus, the youngest and bravest of them, to lay violent hands on Uranus. Uranus was mutilated, cast into chains, and compelled by his sons to pass his sovereignty to Cronus.

But Cronus did not enjoy the fruits of his crime for long. The curse of Uranus, who prophesied that he would suffer a like fate at the hands of his own son, was fulfilled. So anxious was he to avert such a disaster, that he swallowed his children immediately after their birth. Five had already suffered this fate—Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon, but their mother Rhea determined to rescue her next son, Zeus, by a trick. In the place of her child, she gave to her cruel husband a stone wrapped in swaddling-clothes, which he swallowed without further examination. Zeus, who was thus rescued, was brought up by the nymphs in a grotto on Mount Diete, in Crete.

Zeus remained hidden until he had become a young but powerful god. He then attacked and overthrew his father Cronus, whom he also compelled, by means of a device of Gaia, to bring forth the children that he had devoured. One part of the Titans—Oceanus, Themis, Mnemosyne, and Hyperion—submitted without hesitation to the dominion of the new ruler of the world. The others, however, refused allegiance; but Zeus, after a contest of ten years, overthrew them, with the help of the Cyclopes and Hecatonchires. As a punishment, they were cast into Tartarus, which was then closed by Poseidon with brazen gates. After his victory over the Titans, Zeus shared the empire of the world with his two brothers, Poseidon and Hades. The former he made ruler of the ocean and waters; the latter he set over the infernal regions; everything else he retained

for himself.

This new order of things, however, was by no means securely established. The resentment of Gaia led her to produce with Tartarus, her youngest and most powerful son, the giant Typhon, a monster with a hundred fire-breathing dragons' heads, whom she now sent to overthrow the dominion of Zeus. A great battle took place, which shook heaven and earth. Zeus, by means of his never-ceasing thunder-bolts, at length overcame Typhon, and cast him into Tartarus.

Some poets tell of another rebellion, that of the Giants, against the dominion of Zeus. These Giants are said to have sprung from the drops of blood which fell on the earth from the mutilated body of Uranus. They sought to storm Olympus by piling Mount Pelion on Ossa. But after a bloody battle, in which all the gods took part, the two were conquered, and sent to share the fate of the vanquished Titans. The dominion of Zeus was now securely established, and no hostile attack ever after disturbed the peaceful ease of the inhabitants of Olympus.

Popular Myths

War between Old and Young Gods

After dispatching Uranus, Cronus kept the Hecatonchires and the Cyclops imprisoned deep in the earth. He was now the ruler of the earth, and Rhea was his queen. Rhea became pregnant by Cronus with their first child, and was ecstatic. She told Cronus the instant that she knew she was pregnant and this reminded him of his father's prophecy: "One day your own son shall overthrow you, for crime begets crime." After all that he had achieved, he wasn't about to let all slip through his fingers, even if this meant never to have any children of his own. Cronus pretended to be happy, but immediately began to think of ways to dispose of the child once it born.

Rhea soon gave birth to her first child, a daughter. Exhausted after the labor, she looked down and was horrified to see Cronus swallowing their baby! She tried to stop him, but it was too late. She flew into a fit of rage, and rushed at Cronus in blind anger. He brushed her aside and drew the sickle that Gaia had made for him, holding it to her throat. "Any child born from you from this moment on will follow that one," he said to her, watching fear mingle with

hatred in her eyes.

Five children, three daughters and two sons, were born to Rhea through Cronus. They were Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades and Poseidon. Cronus swallowed them all as soon as they were born. By the time that Rhea was pregnant with her sixth child, she went to Gaia for help to protect this child from Cronus. Gaia took her to the isle of Crete, where she had prepared a cave for her daughter. She also offered Rhea a Goat-nymph to suckle her baby when it was born, since Rhea would not be able to nurse the baby herself. There went two attending nymphs with the goat that would look after the baby in Rhea's absence. Gaia summoned a throng of wood sprites to the cave entrance. With the noises they made, it would be impossible, even for a god, to hear the cries of a now-born infant.

On the day that Rhea was to give birth, she went to the cave. She lay in the bed against the solid stone, and began to give birth. The entire earth shook with her mighty labor. Once the baby was born, she wrapped it up in clothes, and presented him to the nymphs, introducing him as Zeus. Before she left the cave, she picked up a stone roughly the same size and weight of her baby, which she wrapped up in swaddling clothes. She returned to Mount Olympus with the stone, and sat in her bedchambers, holding it close to her chest humming softly. Cronus burst into the room, furious that she had given birth without him being there, snatched the stone from her arms, and swallowed it, thinking it was his boy. Rhea apologized for her insolence, and smiled to herself as Cronus left the bedchambers.

Rhea returned periodically to see Zeus as he was growing up. He was being sucked by the goat which produced ambrosia, rather than milk. The bees brought him honey and an eagle would bring him nectar so he could drink. With this diet, he grew to manhood in less than a year. On the day of his first birthday, Rhea told him about his father, and everything that happened to Uranus, and the Cyclops and the Hecatoncheires. She gave a potion to Zeus along with instruction for its use. Together Rhea and Zeus went to Olympus, where Zeus was presented to Cronus as their new cupbearer. Cronus was pleased with the boy's beauty, and allowed him to stay. On the first night on Mount Olympus, Zeus prepared the potion in Cronus' drink as Rhea had instructed, and gave it to Cronus. Immediately after consuming the potion,