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The Enduring Influence of Myth in Modern World

What is a myth? Myth is a traditional story which often involves gods, heroes and supernatural elements that often explains human nature, the way world works and cultural values. For their purpose they mainly resemble holy books yet in some parts they differ. Myths are passed down by generations and as they pass down through time, we inherit some part of those myths and use them in our daily lives. No matter how many years pass, they still influence our modern society through branding, literature, music, movies and even our everyday language. The reason for their survival is simple: they address general human concerns and provide meaning, identity and numerous narratives that will keep living across generations. (Wikipedia)

It can be clearly seen that myths occur in many parts of branding today through names and imagery. They borrow names, shapes, symbols that will evoke certain qualities in their products. There are plenty of examples we can give to names such as Nike, Amazon, Hermes, Pegasus etc. (fullstop360.com). Nike is named after the Greek goddess of victory, symbolizing speed, strength and success, linking the brand to athletic excellence and success while Versace uses Medusa as its logo, symbolizing beauty, passion and power, linking the brand to irresistible beauty and immortality. A similar example to Versace is a brand we use quite a lot in our daily lives, Starbucks. The brand features a siren, a seductive sea creature which captivates her pray through singing with her angelic voice, of which we can resemble to coffee that captivates us. (quora)

Myths have also left significant marks on literature and cinema, often creating the base of the most liked and watched stories of the modern world. To begin with, in Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings, one of the best movies trilogy and book series of history, we see references and resemblances of myths in his story. We can observe that he is affected by mostly Norse, then by Celtic, Finnish, Slavic and Greek language and mythology. For instance, The Ring of Power is influenced by the Norse story of the cursed ring Andvaranaut and the dwarves from The Hobbit resemble the dwarves of Norse Mythology by means of their name, craftsmanship and underground kingdoms. (TheCollector) Tolkien had many other mythical references which clearly shows myths are not dead yet they are adapted to today's world. Similarly, The Matrix trilogy uses themes from various mythologies, including Greek, Christian, Buddhist traditions. The main character Neo follows classic hero's journey which resembles that of Hercules and even Jesus Christ, an ordinary man who finds out he is the chosen and must sacrifice for the good of others. (indigomusic.com)

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There are other significant examples of the use of myths in cinema such as Harry Potter, Game of Thrones, Vikings, Supernatural etc. Harry Potter includes resemblances of myths through names, creatures and objects such as Minerva, the name of the Roman goddess of wisdom and strategy, Phoenix, a legendary bird from Egyptian and Greek mythology that is reborn from its ashes and the Philosopher stone which can be resembled to the magical plant which Gilgamesh sought for eternal life in Sumerian mythology. (Wikipedia) And for Game of Thrones, we might see heroic figures like Daenerys Targaryen and Jon Snow resembled to Persephone and Perseus of Greek mythology while Tyrion Lannister is resembled to Loki of Scandinavian mythology. In Vikings, use of Scandinavian mythology is very intense as the series happens around the Scandinavian beliefs and gods. In supernatural, we might see many kinds of mythological figures such as Lilith from Babylonian mythology, Skin-walkers from Navajo mythology, Kitsune from Japanese mythology and many other mythological creatures. (Supernatural Wiki) Also, mythological figures are very popular in video game and music industry. Games such as God of War, The Witcher, Assassin's Creed Valhalla, Viking: Battle for Asgard etc. are based on Norse mythology while other games such as Hades, Age of Mythology, The Banner Saga etc. are based on Greek mythology. (Wikipedia) When it comes to music there are also solid pieces about mythology like Achilles' Last Stand and Ramble on by Led Zeppelin, Pandora's Box by Aerosmith, Loki by The Cult, Hercules by Elton John, Sirens by Pearl Jam etc. (SongFacts)

Apart from branding and entertainment, mythology influences our daily life and language in many ways. As mentioned in the exam question, the months got their names from mythological figures. For instance, January is named after Janus, the Roman god of beginnings which explains why it's given to the first month and May is named after Maia, an earth goddess of spring and growth in Roman mythology. Even some days of the week are taken from myths such as Thursday, named after Thor, God of thunder and Friday, named after Freya, goddess of love and fertility from Norse mythology and Saturday, named after Saturn, the Roman god of agriculture and time from Roman mythology. (ChasingGods). And when it comes to language, we may hear expressions and idioms that stem from ancient myths. For example, the term "Achilles' heel" refers to a person's weakness, originating from the Greek hero Achilles, who was invulnerable except for his heel. The phrase "Pandora's box" symbolizes an unforeseen trouble, related to the Greek myth in which Pandora's curiosity unleashed chaos upon the world. (Cambridge Dictionary) We also must have heard of some Turkic mythological figures at least once in our lives such as "Alkarısı" which is a supernatural spirit, claimed to visit women who newly gave birth and scare them or steal their baby's breath. There is also a creature called "Karabasan", another version of sleep paralysis in Turkic mythology. (Wikipedia) The fact that they are still used commonly in our country means that the myths keep living in our language despite the years passed.

Based on every example we have discussed, do we really need to question if myths still influence our lives? They do and will continue. One reason for their endurance is their ability to address universal experiences such as love, loss, yearning, courage and mortality. They offer outlines for understanding our struggles and goals. Additionally, myths help societies construct collective identities. Nations, organizations and even political movements often benefit from mythological symbolism to create a sense of purpose. The American eagle, for instance, is rooted in Greco-Roman symbolism of power and sovereignty, much like Zeus's association with the eagle. The Statue of Liberty, with her torch, evokes the imagery of ancient goddesses like Athena or Libertas. By using these mythological references, societies demonstrate values of strength, freedom, and resilience. (Wikipedia)



Consequently, in a consumer society as ours, myths find an easier way to live as they are interesting and make up a significant part of what they are included in. Far from being outdated, they remain an essential part of our cultural fabric. They shape the brands we buy, the stories we consume, the words we speak, and even the values we have. As long as humanity seeks meaning in the world, myths will continue to evolve, adapting to new contexts while preserving their influence.



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