

doctor who the myth makers

Doctor Who: The Myth Makers

Introduction to Doctor Who and Its Mythology

Since its debut in 1963, *Doctor Who* has become a cornerstone of British science fiction, captivating audiences with its inventive storytelling, memorable characters, and expansive universe. Over the decades, the show has evolved from a modest television program into a cultural phenomenon, spawning novels, audio dramas, comics, and a dedicated fanbase. At its core, *Doctor Who* is not merely about time-travel adventures; it is a complex tapestry woven with mythic themes, legendary characters, and recurring motifs that have cemented its status as a modern myth. The phrase **Doctor Who the myth makers** encapsulates the show's role as a creator of contemporary myths—stories that explore fundamental human themes through the lens of science fiction and fantasy.

The Origins of the Mythic Framework in Doctor Who

The Doctor as the Archetypal Hero

The central figure of *Doctor Who*, the Doctor, functions as a quintessential hero archetype. An alien Time Lord from the planet Gallifrey, the Doctor embodies traits found in mythic heroes across cultures:

- **Wisdom and Knowledge:** The Doctor's vast intelligence and curiosity drive the narrative, akin to mythic sages.
- **Compassion and Morality:** The Doctor often acts as a moral compass, championing justice and protecting the innocent.
- **Transformation and Regeneration:** The ability to regenerate symbolizes rebirth, renewal, and the mythic theme of eternal renewal.

This archetype resonates with mythic figures like Odysseus, Merlin, or Gandalf, serving as a guide through chaos and the unknown.

The TARDIS as a Mythic Portal

The Doctor's time machine, the TARDIS (Time And Relative Dimension In Space), acts as a mythic portal—an object that transcends ordinary reality and leads to adventures across time and space. Its iconic exterior, resembling a vintage British police box, symbolizes the bridge between the mundane and the extraordinary, echoing mythic gateways found in various cultures:

- Yggdrasil, the Norse world tree connecting realms
- The Holy Grail as a portal to divine knowledge
- The Tree of Life in many mythologies

The TARDIS's ability to change size and its mysterious nature reinforce its role as a liminal space—an in-between realm where transformations and revelations occur.

Mythic Themes in Doctor Who

The Battle Between Good and Evil

One of the central mythic themes in *Doctor Who* is the eternal struggle between good and evil. The show presents recurring villains and moral dilemmas that echo mythic conflicts:

1. **The Daleks:** As relentless, dehumanizing enemies, they symbolize chaos, destruction, and totalitarian evil.
2. **The Master:** The Doctor's mirror and foil, representing temptation, corruption, and the shadow self.
3. **The Cybermen:** Embodying loss of humanity and the fear of technological dehumanization.

The narrative often depicts the hero's journey as a mythic quest, confronting these archetypal villains to restore balance and harmony.

The Hero's Journey and the Mythic Quest

Following Joseph Campbell's monomyth structure, *Doctor Who* episodes frequently depict the Doctor embarking on a quest that involves:

- **Call to Adventure:** Encounters with mysterious phenomena or threats.
- **Crossing the Threshold:** Entering unfamiliar worlds or dimensions.
- **Trials and Challenges:** Facing monsters, moral dilemmas, and personal doubts.
- **Revelation and Transformation:** Gaining insight or power that leads to change.
- **Return:** The hero returns to the ordinary world with newfound wisdom.

This framework underscores the show's role as a modern myth, portraying the Doctor's adventures as allegories for personal growth and societal challenges.

The Mythic Creatures and Symbols of Doctor Who

Iconic Creatures as Mythic Symbols

Throughout its history, *Doctor Who* has introduced a vast array of creatures and entities that serve as mythic symbols:

- **Weeping Angels:** Statues that move when unobserved, representing the danger of the unseen and the power of perception.
- **The Silence:** A religious-like order with the power to make people forget, symbolizing forgotten truths and the danger of collective amnesia.
- **The Ood:** Alien beings with telepathic abilities, embodying themes of empathy, interconnectedness, and servitude.

These creatures often reflect human fears, hopes, and moral lessons, transforming them into mythic archetypes.

Symbols of Power and Knowledge

In addition to creatures, various symbols recur throughout the series, reinforcing its mythic fabric:

- **The Seal of Rassilon:** The emblem of Gallifrey's Time Lords, representing authority, destiny, and the divine right to govern.
- **The Key to Time:** An object representing ultimate knowledge and control over reality.
- **The Sonic Screwdriver:** A versatile tool that symbolizes ingenuity, problem-solving, and the power of knowledge.

The Cultural Impact and Mythic Resonance

Doctor Who as a Modern Myth

Unlike traditional myths rooted in ancient religions, *Doctor Who* functions as a contemporary myth that addresses modern concerns—technology, identity, morality, and existential questions. Its stories often serve as allegories for societal issues, making the series a mirror to collective consciousness.

Mythic Motifs in Fan Culture

The show's mythic qualities extend beyond the screen, influencing fan interpretations, fan fiction, and art. Fans often see the Doctor as a mythic hero figure, engaging in quests that reflect personal and societal struggles. The series' symbols and themes inspire a mythmaking process that sustains its cultural relevance.

Conclusion: The Enduring Mythic Legacy of Doctor Who

In sum, *Doctor Who* functions as a modern mythmaking machine, blending science fiction with timeless mythic themes. The Doctor, the TARDIS, and the array of mythic creatures and symbols form a universe rich with allegory, moral lessons, and archetypal stories. As a myth maker, the series continues to explore fundamental questions about humanity, morality, and the cosmos, ensuring its place in the pantheon of modern mythic storytelling. Through its narrative layers and symbolic depth, *Doctor Who* remains a testament to the power of storytelling to forge new myths for contemporary

times, inspiring generations to imagine, question, and seek meaning in the vast cosmos of human experience.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the focus of the documentary 'Doctor Who: The Myth Makers'?

'Doctor Who: The Myth Makers' is a documentary that explores the cultural impact, storytelling, and behind-the-scenes aspects of the classic 'Doctor Who' serials, particularly emphasizing their mythic and legendary qualities.

Which 'Doctor Who' serials are analyzed in 'The Myth Makers' documentary?

The documentary primarily examines the serials 'The Myth Makers' (1965), featuring the Second Doctor, and discusses their significance within the broader context of the show's history and mythos.

How does 'Doctor Who: The Myth Makers' contribute to understanding the show's legacy?

The documentary provides insights into how 'Doctor Who' has evolved as a mythic storytelling phenomenon, highlighting its influence on popular culture and its role in shaping sci-fi narratives over decades.

Are there any special features or interviews included in 'Doctor Who: The Myth Makers'?

Yes, the documentary features interviews with cast, crew, and experts who discuss the making of the serials, their thematic significance, and the show's enduring appeal.

Where can I watch 'Doctor Who: The Myth Makers'?

'Doctor Who: The Myth Makers' is available on various streaming platforms, DVD collections, and special 'Doctor Who' documentary releases—check official sources or specialized streaming services for availability.

Additional Resources

Doctor Who: The Myth Makers is a compelling serial from the classic Doctor Who series, originally broadcast in 1965. As a pivotal story in the show's rich history, it offers fans and newcomers alike a fascinating blend of adventure, mythology, and storytelling that exemplifies the show's enduring appeal. This serial, written by David Whitaker, features the Second Doctor played by Patrick

Troughton and delves into themes of myth, history, and the power of storytelling itself. In this review, we will explore the plot, characters, themes, production values, and its place within the larger Doctor Who universe to provide a comprehensive understanding of why The Myth Makers remains a noteworthy serial in the series.

Overview and Plot Summary

The Myth Makers is set during the ancient Greek period, specifically during the Trojan War. The Doctor and his companions, Vicki and Steven, arrive in the midst of the legendary conflict, seeking to understand the local mythology and history. Their adventure begins when they encounter the Greek hero Odysseus, portrayed here as a complex and resourceful figure, embroiled in the legendary Trojan siege.

The plot centers around the Doctor's attempts to prevent the Trojans from falling to the Greeks and to uncover the true nature of the mysterious "Myth Makers" — beings who seem to influence and manipulate the course of history and myth. As the story unfolds, the TARDIS crew becomes entangled with Greek gods, legendary warriors, and the complex web of fate and storytelling that defines Greek mythology.

The serial is notable for blending historical fiction with science fiction elements, creating a layered narrative that explores how myths are constructed and the importance of stories in shaping human culture.

Characters and Performances

The Second Doctor (Patrick Troughton)

Patrick Troughton's portrayal of the Second Doctor is a highlight of this serial. His characteristic playful yet cunning demeanor is well-suited to the story's mythic themes. Troughton injects humor and warmth into his performance, balancing the serious plot with moments of levity. His interactions with the Greek characters, especially Odysseus, reveal a clever, resourceful side that adds depth to his character.

Vicki and Steven

Vicki, played by Maureen O'Brien, continues to be the adventurous and intelligent companion, often acting as the voice of reason amid chaos. Steven, portrayed by Peter Purves, adds a heroic and brave element, often taking on more action-oriented roles. Their interactions with Greek characters and their efforts to understand the mythic context are vital to the story's development.

Greek Characters and Mythological Figures

The serial features a range of Greek characters, including Odysseus, portrayed with a mixture of gravitas and wit. The portrayals of gods and mythic figures are somewhat stylized, reflecting the theatrical and historical tone of the serial. The performances add a layer of authenticity and mythic grandeur, although some may find the acting a bit theatrical by modern standards.

Thematic Analysis

Myth and Reality

One of the central themes of *The Myth Makers* is the relationship between myth and reality. The serial explores how stories shape human perception, influence history, and serve as tools for understanding the world. The presence of the "Myth Makers," who manipulate events and stories, underscores this idea that myths are powerful constructs that can be shaped and altered.

Storytelling as Power

The serial emphasizes storytelling's role in human culture. The Greek myths are portrayed as both a reflection of human values and as a means of controlling or understanding fate. The Doctor's efforts to uncover the truth behind the myths suggest that stories are not just entertainment but foundational to civilization.

Fate and Free Will

The Greek setting naturally brings up questions of fate versus free will. The gods and mythic figures seem to have a hand in shaping events, but the Doctor and his companions show that human agency can influence outcomes, even within the confines of mythic destiny.

Production Values and Visuals

The Myth Makers was produced during the mid-1960s, and as such, it reflects the limitations and strengths of the era's television technology and budgets.

- Pros:
 - Creative use of sets and costumes to evoke ancient Greece.
 - Effective use of location shooting and props to create a mythic atmosphere.
 - Strong theatrical performances that compensate for the limited special effects.
- Cons:

- Limited special effects and visual effects, common in the era, which can appear dated.
- Some scenes, especially those involving Greek gods or mythic creatures, rely heavily on theatrical acting and dialogue rather than visual spectacle.
- The serial's pacing can feel slow by modern standards, especially in the dialogue-heavy scenes.

Overall, the production values serve the story well, emphasizing atmosphere and character over spectacle.

Historical Context and Significance

The Myth Makers is significant within the Doctor Who canon because it exemplifies the show's early experimentation with historical and mythological storytelling. It showcases the series' ability to blend genres—combining science fiction with classical history and mythology—and to explore profound themes through adventurous narratives.

Furthermore, the serial is notable for its ambitious scope, bringing ancient Greece to life on a modest budget while engaging with timeless stories. It reflects the show's willingness to tackle complex themes and its interest in the power of myth and storytelling, which remain relevant today.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths:

- Rich historical and mythological setting that provides a unique backdrop.
- Thought-provoking themes about myth, storytelling, and reality.
- Strong performances, especially from Patrick Troughton.
- Creative costume and set design that evoke ancient Greece.

Weaknesses:

- Limited special effects and visual spectacle by modern standards.
- Pacing issues due to dialogue-heavy scenes.
- Some theatrical acting that may seem dated.
- Occasional reliance on stereotypes or simplified characterizations.

Legacy and Reception

While The Myth Makers is not as universally acclaimed as some other serials, it holds a special place in the hearts of Doctor Who fans for its ambitious storytelling and mythic atmosphere. Its exploration of the relationship between myth and history resonates with viewers interested in classical mythology.

and narrative theory.

Modern fans and critics often appreciate the serial for its historical and thematic richness, despite its production limitations. It serves as an important reminder of the show's early days of experimentation and storytelling depth.

Conclusion

Doctor Who: The Myth Makers is a fascinating serial that demonstrates the show's capacity to blend science fiction with classical mythology. With compelling performances, thoughtful themes, and creative production design, it offers a memorable journey into the mythic past. While it may show its age in terms of effects and pacing, its exploration of storytelling's power, fate, and history makes it a noteworthy chapter in the Doctor Who saga. Fans of classical mythology, historical drama, and science fiction alike will find much to appreciate in this serial's rich narrative tapestry.

Whether viewed as a nostalgic piece of television history or as a thought-provoking exploration of myth, The Myth Makers remains a valuable part of the Doctor Who legacy, exemplifying the series' enduring ability to reinvent and reimagine stories across time and space.

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Harmes looks at the show's frequent exploration of other sources to create memorable episodes. Harmes observes that adaptation in Doctor Who is not just a matter of transferring literary works to the screen, but of bringing a diversity of texts into dialogue with the established mythology of the series as well as with longstanding science fiction tropes. In this process, original stories are not just resituated, but transformed into new works. Harmes considers what this approach reveals about adaptation, television production, the art of storytelling, and the long-term success and cultural resonance enjoyed by Doctor Who. Doctor Who and the Art of Adaptation will be of interest to students of literature and television alike, and to scholars interested in adaptation studies. It will also appeal to fans of the series interested in tracing the deep cultural roots of television's longest-running and most literate science-fiction adventure.

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effects of the long-running cult favorite. The various incarnations of Doctor Who, including television, stage, film, radio, and spin-offs are discussed. In addition, the book provides an extensive listing of print, Internet, and fan club resources for Doctor Who.

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doctor who the myth makers: The Doctor Who Discontinuity Guide Paul Cornell, Martin Day, Keith Topping, 2013-10-31 When it was originally published, the *Discontinuity Guide* was the first attempt to bring together all of the various fictional information seen in BBC TV's DOCTOR WHO, and then present it in a coherent narrative. Often copied but never matched, this is the perfect guide to the 'classic' Doctors. Fulffs, goofs, double entendres, fashion victims, technobabble, dialogue disasters: these are just some of the headings under which every story in the Doctor's first twenty-seven years of his career is analysed. Despite its humorous tone, the book has a serious purpose. Apart from drawing attention to the errors and absurdities that are among the most loveable features of DOCTOR WHO, this reference book provides a complete analysis of the

story-by-story creation of the Doctor Who Universe. One sample story, Pyramids of Mars, yields the following gems: TECHNOBABBLE: a crytonic particle accelerator, a relative continuum stabiliser, and triobipysics. DIALOGUE TRIUMPHS: 'I'm a Time Lord... You don't understand the implications. I'm not a human being. I walk in eternity.' CONTINUITY: the doctor is about 750 years old at this point, and has apparently aged 300 years since Tomb of the Cybermen. He ages about another 300 years between this story and the seventh Doctor's Time and the Rani. An absolute must for every Doctor Who fan, this new edition of the classic reference guide has not been updated at all for the 50th anniversary.

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