



## **Distinctive Mythological Features in English Children's Literature**

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**Abstract:** This article explores the peculiarities of mythological elements in English children's literature. It focuses on how mythology – especially Celtic, Norse, and Christian motifs – shapes the narrative structures, characters, and symbolic systems of children's fiction in England. Special attention is given to works such as *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis and *Harry Potter* by J.K. Rowling. The study reveals that myth in English children's literature serves not only as a narrative tool but also as a medium of moral, cultural, and spiritual education.

**Keywords:** English children's literature, mythology, fairy tale, fantasy, symbolism, C.S. Lewis, J.K. Rowling, mythological motif, cultural narrative, moral development.

English children's literature has long embraced the use of mythology to convey moral lessons, inspire imagination, and embed cultural identity. From ancient folklore to modern fantasy, English literary tradition for children is rich in mythological symbols and archetypes. Mythological peculiarities in such literature are not merely decorative; they structure the narrative and provide deep symbolic meanings, often bridging the gap between past and present, the real and the imaginary.

In English children's literature, mythology functions as both a thematic and structural foundation. Writers like C.S. Lewis and J.K. Rowling extensively draw upon existing mythologies—such as Greek, Norse, Christian, and Celtic traditions—to construct fantasy worlds that resonate with universal human experiences.

In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, C.S. Lewis incorporates Christian allegory (e.g., Aslan as a Christ figure), Greco-Roman myth (fauns, centaurs), and medieval British folklore. The fusion of these mythologies creates a hybrid world where the moral battle between good and evil is symbolized through archetypal characters and magical creatures. Lewis's mythological method is didactic yet imaginative, fostering ethical thinking and spiritual reflection in young readers.

One of the key peculiarities of mythological usage in English children's literature is the integration of moral values with symbolic fantasy. Characters and events are often metaphorical: dragons represent inner fears, magical objects signify

virtues or vices, and quests symbolize personal growth. In J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, elements like the phoenix (rebirth), the unicorn (purity), and the serpent (evil or cunning) are deeply rooted in Western mythological traditions.

These symbolic elements are not random; they guide children through complex ethical questions such as loyalty, sacrifice, temptation, and courage. Myth becomes a mirror through which the child reader sees his or her own world reflected and transformed.

While English mythological literature for children is rooted in its own cultural heritage, it also appeals to universal human experiences. The archetypes it employs—hero, mentor, trickster, shadow—transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries. Nevertheless, the portrayal of mythical elements often reflects British national identity, colonial memory, and Christian ethos. For instance, the settings in both Lewis and Rowling's works often feature British environments—castles, woodlands, boarding schools—which are combined with ancient myth to create a uniquely English fantasy realm. This blending helps young readers relate local culture to broader mythical patterns.

Mythological peculiarities in English children's literature play a crucial role in shaping imagination, ethical judgment, and cultural literacy. Through characters, motifs, and plots derived from various myth traditions, authors build rich fantasy worlds that engage young minds on multiple levels. The continued popularity of such works across generations speaks to the enduring power of myth to educate, inspire, and unite.

As global readers continue to interact with English children's literature, the mythological elements serve as both a window into British cultural heritage and a bridge toward shared human values.

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