



Journey through some unheard cultures and a look at Ghost Hunting and Witch Hunting

Ms. Ancilin Fernando

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies

Ms. M. Manoranjani

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies

Ms. Shreeja Shreekumar Pillai

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies

Ms. Vaisnavi K

Assistant Professor, Department of English
Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies

Abstract:

The research paper dives into the nature of mythology, exploring the historical evolution, contemporary myths and the cultural significance. Ghost hunting and witch hunting are some of the unheard cultures that are beyond the realms of traditional myths by exploring the diverse mythologies from ancient Egyptian and Babylonians narratives, which reflect views on life, death, folklores, spiritual philosophy. There are many intriguing rituals that explores varieties of myths like baby jumping in Spain for purification, baby throwing an Maharashtra for health and spitting on the bride in Greece to ward off evil. Beyond this there are some bizarres customs like Nale Ba Day which is celebrated in Bangalore to ward off the witch, Bullet Ant Ritual in Brazil wich is a part of male initiation rite and Kuldhara village abandon of due to a curse. The paper ultimately exploring the power of myths and their associated fears, beliefs and cultural preservation.

Key Words: Mythology, Culture, Rituals, Ghost Hunting, Witch Hunting, Belief Systems, Folklore, Social Practices.

Mythology in the general sense gives us a feeling of belief that is not true. My paper here tries to unveil some of the unknown myths that are still prevalent in some parts of world. I have tried to inculcate some of the bizarre cultures that are still followed. Legends are firmly connected to religion or otherworldliness.

Numerous social orders bunch their fantasies, legends, and history together, believing myths and myths to be genuine records of their far off past. In specific, creation of fantasies happens in an early stage age when the world had not accomplished its later structure. Different cultures clarify how a general public's traditions, organizations, and restrictions were set up and blessed. There is an unpredictable connection between presentation of fantasies and the sanctioning of customs.

The term folklore may either allude to the investigation of fantasies as a rule, or an assemblage of legends in regards to a specific subject. The investigation of legend started in old history. Adversary classes of the Greek fantasies by Euhemerus, Plato, and Sallustius were created by the Neoplatonists and later restored by Renaissance mythographers. Today, the investigation of legend proceeds in a wide assortment of scholarly fields, including fables contemplates, philology, brain research, and human sciences. Additionally, the scholastic examinations of assemblages of legend are known as near folklore. Since the term fantasy is generally used to infer that a story isn't dispassionately evident, numerous followers of religions see their religion's accounts as obvious and accordingly object to the tales being portrayed as fantasies while considering the to be of different religions as being fantasy. Naming all strict accounts as myths can be considered as treating various practices with equality.

Our insight into the legends related here gets from artistic works primarily — from epic and verse, from dramatization, accounts, sentiments, and from other composition stories. Be that as it may, it is imperative to recognize folklore, which is strict and social conviction delivered in stories, and the scholarly structure those accounts take. Writing is frequently a late result of human advancements. It happens when there is sufficient relaxation to record and concoct stories, and enough education to see the value in the records. Since it generally happens late in a culture, legendary composing once in a while happens as a culture is breaking down. At the point when uncertainty becomes inescapable it is doubly important to record a group's fantasies — to protect them from eradication and to frame a center from which different societies can be fabricated. At the point when root esteems are imperiled individuals take care to safeguard them in stories. Fanciful writing might be found to some degree as a treating of a culture, where a living confidence is turning into a verifiable interest. This isn't in every case valid for course (the Bible being a prominent exemption), however it holds frequently enough in the folklores described here.

In Egyptian legend there is a baffling bounty of divine beings and holy names. The pyramid messages allude to a few fantasies without advising them completely. We should depend on an outsider, Plutarch, the late Greek student of history, for a total record of the Isis and Osiris fantasy. This story focuses to a static, adoring society, one established on moral battle, passing, and an existence in the wake of death to come.

The foremost Babylonian legendary works are the Epic of Creation and the Gilgamesh Epic, which uncover a somewhat coarsely manly culture, sexy and pleased, yet with a profound negativity notwithstanding passing.

Indian folklore is huge, dissipated through numerous artistic works: The Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Upanishads, the Mahabharata, the Ramayama, and Buddhist compositions, to name some of them. They show a culture developing from a crude love of nature and natural capacity to magical theory and an acknowledgment of virtuous standards.

In its abstract signs Classical folklore covers over 1,000 years of composing. It begins with Homer, who lived around 800 B.C. furthermore, stays the best epic artist of the West; and it closes with the Roman elegiac artist Musaeus, a minor essayist who lived in the fifth century A.D.. It incorporates a portion of the world's best composition and a portion of its bluntest. Additionally, it incorporates two particular societies, the Greek and the Roman.

Greek folklore is brilliant, individualistic, incredibly differentiated, and rationalistic. It shows a culture where individual honor is central and in which struggle is consistently present. Homer is both enthusiastic and unmistakable in the manner he portrays war. He gets a kick out of his detects, in mental fortitude and ability, however he additionally shows the abhorrences of death. He is easygoing toward the divine beings, respecting their strength yet giggling at their human jokes. Gone against to him is the early artist Hesiod, savage, devout, somewhat guileless, yet loaded with amazing conviction in the divine beings. He loathes Homer's disrespectful demeanor. In any case, Homer's Iliad and Odyssey and Hesiod's Theogony contribute a lot as far as anyone is concerned of Greek legends.

The Homeric Hymns, recorded from 700 B.C. to around 450 B.C., were sonnets in recognition of different divine beings that recounted their different endeavors. Pindar, an expressive writer of the late 6th century B.C., composed Odes commending the champs of Greek celebrations where legends were alluded to or unequivocally told. Pindar was pretty much as devout as Hesiod, yet he expurgated the fierce components and defended the legends for a more modern crowd.

The Greek producers, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes, utilized fantasies as material for their shows. Aeschylus investigated the issue of heavenly equity, Sophocles utilized fantasy to dig into blameless affliction and revenge; and Euripides utilized legend to introduce divine shameful acts.

Aristophanes, in any case, alluded to fantasies in an easygoing way. In about a century, from around 500

B.C. to 400 B.C., Greek dramatization mirrored devolution from high confidence to significant dissatisfaction.

Composition authors like the history specialist Herodotus and the rationalist Plato composed on legendary material, and Plato indeed made philosophical stories in a legendary vein. In any case, after Plato and Aristotle Athenian culture was bankrupt, and another Greek culture emerged in Alexandria in Egypt. It was gentler, more troubled, and to some degree exhausted. Apollonius of Rhodes composed his *Argonautica*, the tale of Jason, and the Alexandrian writers went to cherish and peaceful subjects as chief topics.

At that point the Romans assumed control more than, an extreme, dull individuals to whom folklore was basically unfamiliar. They venerated the State and the family to whom their divine beings were docile. The Romans acquired fantasies from Greek human progress however had not many of their own. The fantasies they had were generally recorded legends including political saints. However they made a commitment to writing in a legendary vein, to a great extent through the history specialist Livy and the writer Vergil.

Different essayists, as well, took up legendary material. Ovid was entranced by adoration' and female brain science. His *Metamorphoses*, *Fasti*, and *Heroides* take up fanciful subjects charmingly, yet without conviction. Apuleius likely created the fantasy of Cupid and Psyche. Musaeus composed of Hero and Leander. This fixation on adoration and energy was normal for debauched Romans. Lucian, who wrote in the second century A.D. parodied the divine beings. Apollodorus composed a broad record of the old fantasies to save them. Furthermore, Pausanias took a visit through Greece, a nostalgic excursion in the second century A.D., to visit the destinations of fanciful events, and composed of his movements in *Descriptions of Greece*. Roman culture had depleted itself.

The Teutonic fantasies of northern Europe, as they were protected in Tacitus and the Icelandic Eddas, show a hard, warlike, miserable culture wherein one's delights were not many yet extremely serious. The Anglo-Saxon epic of Beowulf uncovers the honorable side of Teutonic morals.

Arthurian legends were recorded in middle age sentiments and highlight the Christianization of the old champion code. Gallantry sublimated ancestral fighting into battle for unique standards of equity, virtue, and honor. Love, regularly double-crossing love, gave affection to valorous deeds in the sentiments. From the early Welsh stories recorded in The Mabinogion to Malory's Morte d'Arthur in the fifteenth century, the stories of Arthur and his knights filled in wealth and profundity. Be that as it may, when of Malory the noble protected rangers were practically outdated.

Each culture appears to make a particular gallant sort that is effectively conspicuous. The objectives of a general public decide the sort of legend it praises. Our way of life is no special case, and like these terminated human advancements we will in general expressive our qualities when they are compromised. America's incredible commitment to well known folklore so far has been the cattle rustler. For over 100 years the generalization of the recluse cowhand, intense, fair, ingenious, has been emphasized in the media, similarly as America was getting metropolitan, bureaucratized, mechanical. Whatever new brave sorts rise out of our way of life will most likely be somewhat antiquated, battling savage powers in whatever appearance they come.

Some of the unheard cultures in different parts of the world

1. The 'Nale Ba' Day

There are rumours that a witch roamed through the roads of Bangalore during the '90s, thumping house to house. Furnished with the forces of double dealing, she would talk in the voice of a direct relation and when you opened the entryway, you'd kick the bucket that is you won't see the other day.

The inhabitants thought of a way out to save their lives by making a poster of 'Nale Ba' (come tomorrow) and kept it outside their homes. The neighborhood Kannada-speaking witch was very faithful – turned up at your home, took a look at the sign, disappeared, returned again tomorrow, took a look at the sign and still the cycle proceeds. That's why April 1 is considered as Nale Ba Day in some parts of Bangalore.

2. Bullet Ants Ritual

This ritual is for young men only in Brazil. Young boys' of 12 years of age have to gather bullet ant stings from the forest, which are then used to make ant sting gloves. The boys wear the gloves for ten to thirty minutes, playing out a dance while those furious ants sting them. One sting from the inch-long insect is supposed to be 30-times more difficult than a honey bee sting, or probably as agonizing as a discharge, giving them their name. The Brazilian Amazon homes also known as the Satere Mawe Tribe preserve this tradition as they want the young boys to prove their worth of becoming men. As per the Satere Mawe customs, the stings from the bullet ant stings sets them up for the agony of adulthood and how to overcome torment without showing their tenderness.

3. The abandoned village of Jaisalmer

The town of Kuldhara wears a frightful forlorn inclination – one which makes you shudder when you stroll through its unwanted houses. The myth associated with the village is that the head of the village had his eyes on the chief's daughter and forcefully wanted to marry her. Rather than agreeing to his desire, all villagers decided to abandon the village, leaving no trace of their whereabouts. The village of Kuldhara is still abandoned due to the curse of the villagers till today. To make a factual check, members of the Paranormal Society of Delhi went to spend a night at Kuldhara town. Moving shadows, frequented voices and hand engravings of kids on vehicles are a portion of the startling things they noticed.

4. Baby Jumping, Spain

The myth associated with this ritual is prevalent in the rules of the pagan rituals since seventeenth century is that the soul of a new baby should be cleansed. The ritual which now a mix of pagan and Catholic rituals are carried out every year before the feast of Corpus Christi. The babies born on the previous year are laid on a mat in the middle of the town through a procession. Men dressed as Satan run between and hop over the infants. Then, the heads of the Catholic Church in the Burgos Region purge them with blessed water. Interestingly this ritual is still followed till date.

5. Baby throwing, Maharashtra

When in Spain , men jumps over a baby to purify it, in India the baby is thrown from a tower for its healthy life. In the village of Maharashtra, the parents of the child throw the baby from the tower over to a sheet help by the villagers under the tower. This ritual is scary and fearful and is even restricted by the government but still it's practiced among the Hindus and Muslims.

6. Throwing of broken dishes, Denmark

In Japan when a dish is broken they join it to make it broken but beautiful to symbolize love and eternity but in Denmark the broken dishes are stored and kept aside until New Year's Eve. The broken dishes, plates, glasses are thrown at the homes of your friends and family to wish good luck for the New Year.

7. Spitting on the bride, Greek

Would you mind spitting your bride on the wedding day? If it's in India, the divorce dated would be fixed on the marriage day. But in Greek this ritual was popularized to wish good luck and ward off devil. Thank to lord as this ritual evolved and now the guset just forcefully utter "fltou fltou" to show the symbolic act.

8. Pointing Lips Nicaragua

We do use gestures or facial expressions for communication but have you ever used your lips to point out something rather than your hands. In Nicaragua people move their lips to point things in a conversation. They just move their lips to side to side to indicate things happening nearby.

We have always seen our parents frightening us with stories of evil men or women who would come from nowhere to eat us if we don't eat our food or if misbehave or something. The table below show the exquisite insight to the myths recreated in the world as parental weapon to scare their innocent children.

Sl.No	Name	Place	Distinct Features/ Myth
1.	La Llorana	Mexico	The ghost woman killed her children by drowning to be with a man, but drowned herself when he cheated her. She snatches children who roam around the riverbank mistaking them for her children.
2.	BabaYaga	Russian	The woman who flies in a mortar attacking children who misbehave.
3.	H'awouahoua	Algeria	A monster made from any animal parts with flaming eyes. Would wear the skins of children who misbehave
4.	Aoboza	Japan	A light blue cyclopean monk who kidnaps children who play in the fields instead of going straight to home after school.
5.	Oude Rode Ogen	Belgium	Children who stay up past their bed time are hunted by this cannibalistic shape shifter.

6.	Baubas	Lithuania	A red-eyed evil spirit with wrinkly hands who attacks the misbehaving children by pulling their hairs.
7.	Dongola Miso	Congo	The scary eyed monster who warns children of upcoming danger.
8.	Cuca	Brazil	The crocodile woman who steals children who will not go to sleep.
9.	Grandmother Tiger	Taiwan	A child eating tiger disguised as a grandmother. (The origin of red riding hood story)
10.	Gurumapa	Nepal	Ape-like creature who devours disobedient children.

A look into ghost-hunting and witch hunting

Witch –hunting

The wide practice of witch hunting is prevalent in Europe, Africa etc since 1950s. Black magic or Kaala Jaadu are some of the terms associated with witch- hunting. A source from Wikipedia accounts witch-hunting in India as :

There is no documented evidence of witch-hunting in India before 1792. The earliest evidence of witch-hunts in India can be found in the Santhal witch trials in 1792. In the Singhbhum district of the Chhotanagpur division in Company-ruled India, not only were those accused of being witches murdered, but also those related to the accused to ensure that they won't avenge the deaths (Roy Choudhary 1958: 88). The Chhotanagpur region was

majorly populated by an adivasi population called the Santhals. The existence of witches was a belief central to the Santhals. Witches were feared and were supposed to be engaged in anti-social activities. They were also supposed to have the power to kill people by feeding on their entrails, and causing fevers in cattle among other evils. Therefore, according to the adivasi population the cure to their disease and sickness was the elimination of these witches who were seen as the cause.^[101]

The practice of witch-hunt among Santhals was more brutal than that in Europe. Unlike Europe, where witches were strangled before being burnt, the santhals forced them "...to eat human excreta and drink blood before throwing them into the flames."

The East India Company (EIC) banned the persecution of witches in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Chhotanagpur in the 1840s–1850s. Despite the ban, very few cases were reported as witch-hunting was not seen as a crime. The Santhals believed that the ban in fact allowed the activities of witches to flourish. Thus, the effect of the ban was contrary to what the EIC had intended. During 1857–58, there was a surge in witch-hunting; coinciding during the period of a major rebellion, which has led some scholars to see the resurgence of the activity as a form of resistance to Company rule. (Witch-Hunt)

But what makes witch hunting different from ghost hunting. Is the use of term or the tools used for hunting? In India, mainly in Assam witch hunting is more ambiguous than ghost hunting. Witch hunters roam rather than wizard hunters.

Ghost Hunting

Phantom chasing, additionally called paranormal examination, is the way toward exploring areas that are allegedly spooky by apparitions. Most phantom trackers attempt to gather proof of paranormal action by taking photographs or utilizing hardware that might have the option to distinguish the presence of spirits.

One ghost-hunting group called "A Midwest Haunting" based in Macomb, Illinois, reported that the number of people taking its tours had tripled, jumping from about 600 in 2006 to 1,800 in 2008. Others, such as Marie Cuff of "Idaho Spirit Seekers" pointed to increased traffic on their websites and message boards as an indication that ghost hunting was becoming more accepted. Participants say that ghost hunting allows them to enjoy the friendship of like-minded people and actively pursue their interest in the paranormal. According to Jim Willis of "Ghosts of Ohio", his group's membership had doubled, growing to 30 members since it was founded in 1999 and includes both true believers and total skeptics. Willis says his group is "looking for answers, one way or another" and that skepticism is a prerequisite for those who desire to be "taken seriously in this field."

Author John Potts says that the present day pursuit of "amateur ghost hunting" can be traced back to the Spiritualist era and early organizations founded to investigate paranormal phenomena, like London's The Ghost Club and the Society for Psychical Research, but that modern investigations are unrelated to academic parapsychology. Potts writes that modern ghost hunting groups ignore the scientific method and instead follow a form of "techno-mysticism".

The popularity of ghost hunting has led to some injuries. Unaware that a "spooky home" in Worthington, Ohio was occupied, a group of teenagers stepped on the edge of the property

to explore. The homeowner fired on the teenagers' automobile as they were leaving, seriously injuring one. A woman hunting for ghosts was killed in a fall from a University of Toronto building. (Ghost hunting)

I gave a brief analysis of ghost hunting and witch hunting so as bring the political agenda behind the targeting of women in witch-hunting. Through the mindset of myths many practices are carried out to target women, men and even children to maintain ratio of that particular place in the name of ghost hunting and witch hunting.

A classic difference of ghost hunting and witch hunting can be understood from the table given below:

Ghost Hunting	Witch Hunting
1.Also known as paranormal investigation	1.Also known as dayan hunting or witch-purge.
2.Investigation on the basis of any paranormal activity	2.Carried by tagging anyone particularly woman as a bad omen
3. Tools like camera, a set of batteries and other technological gadgets are required to understand any activity.	3. Tool of suspicion is enough to carry out the investigation.
4. Usually people freak out or get ill after the investigation.	4. The dead end as the one who is hunted is either hanged or buried. Sometimes the property and all belongings are even snatched.

The paper has tried to cover some the amusing cultures that are still used to bring out the emotions associated with mythology. Some are fascinating while some are still unbelievable. The study of ghost hunting and witch hunting was made with the use of some scholarly papers that gave an idea of hidden

political moves. There are still mythologies related to ghost hunting and witch hunting. I have just attempted to analyze it in a perspective view. One instance of witch hunt can be seen when the great actress Rekha was categorized as a witch for the death of her husband but it was nullified because of her belief. But that can't be the case of many women who are still suffering in the name of witch-hunt. I have just made an attempt to give a rollercoaster ride through myths. A journey of remembrance, a journey of nostalgia, a journey of fear, a journey of belief and the journey still goes on.

References

“11 Surprising Customs from Around the World.” *Culture trip*, <https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/usa/articles/12-surprising-customs-from-around-the-world/>.

“Evil Parental Weapon.” *Pinterest*, <https://www.pinterest.ph/pin/819795938404946980/>.

“Ghost Hunting.” *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_hunting.

Menon, Anoop. “10 most bizarre traditions of India.” *India.com*, <https://www.india.com/travel/articles/10-most-bizarre-traditions-of-india-3229247/>.

“Myth.” *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myth>.

“Mythology.” *Cliffnotes*, <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/m/mythology/about-mythology>.

“Strange Cultural Traditions Around the World.” *All the Rooms*, <https://www.alltherooms.com/blog/dark-tourism-the-most-unusual-customs-around-the-world/>.

“Witch Hunt.” *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Witch-hunt#:~:text=In%20current%20language%2C%20%22witch%2D,moral%20panic%20or%20mass%20hysteria>.