

# A Probe into Modern Life Philosophy in Greek Legend

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**Abstract:** Greek legends have eternal charm, which is not only reflected in literature, but also in the rich wisdom of life contained in legends. For the modern people in the twenty-first Century, reading the Greek legends could still obtain rich life enlightenment from its life philosophy. According to the view of the Greek legend on human beings, the two aspects were attached great importance to life and emphasized on the process of action, so as to find out the source of happiness of the Greek people. In this way, the significance of the Greek legend to guide the modern people.

**Keywords:** Greek legend, Philosophy of life, The modern enlightenment, Process.

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## 1. Introduction

To every nation, legends were living fossils of their culture, and were the starting point of their cultural spirit and personality. She contained their opinions on the world and themselves. As the most systematic, rich and most charming legend in the world, the Greek legend also contains rich philosophy of life. Till today, it can still be the spiritual chicken soup to guide us to know ourselves and life.

"Knowing yourself." the prophecy carved in the divine Apollo temple was the first question that the Greek god wanted to answer, and also the question that everyone of us longed for the answer. That was, what was a person? According to the Greek legend "The heaven and earth were created. The sea rose and fell on both sides of the river. Fish were playing in the water, birds were singing in the air. The ground was crowded with animals, but no soul could control the creatures in the surrounding world. At this time, a presbyter, Marcus, landed on the ground. He was smart and wise. He knew that the seed of the God was hidden in the soil, so he picked up some soil and wetted it with water. He pinched it so hard that it could be made. It became the image of a God, the controller of the world. In order to give life to the human form made of soil, he took good and evil things from the hearts of all kinds of animals and sealed them in human's chest. Among the gods, he had a friend, who was the goddess of wisdom; She was surprised at the creation of the son of Tan, because he blew his soul and sacred breath to this creature that only had a half life."

Through this legend, the ancient Greek expressed their understanding of human beings. First of all, human beings were unique existences. When Prometheus injected a mixture of different animal personalities into each of them, each of them had their own unique existences; Secondly, people were united in material and spirit, limited and infinite. The outer shell made of soil was limited, but because of the sacred breath blew by the intelligent goddess, people had the same infinite soul and spirit as God. The understanding of human's personality and complexity contained in this legend had become the starting point of the Greek philosophy of life.

Since life was limited, and the Greek people lived on the sea, the sea was changeable and could take people's life away at any time, so when death came, people could not control it. The only thing people could control was that they were still

alive, and they could live happily every moment of life. The Greek legends were always filled with worldly joy and optimistic emotions. In the Greek legends, people could often see people and gods enjoying feasts, music, dance, hunting, bathing, love, sports and sleeping. They were seeking happiness in natural beauty, material enjoyment, and pleasant cultural art and sports games. It could be said that no race could fully enjoy the happiness of the present life and cherish the life itself like the Greek. Just as the Alcotis said, "fate is unpredictable. Who knows how it runs? We can't ask for advice. We can only treat your life as your own, and the rest will belong to fate. The life of serious and sad people is not life at all, it is suffering." The Greek people who loved modern life did not avoid death. They also created the most terrifying image of the world after death in the legends of the world. However, the horror of death did not make the Greek people worry all day long, nor did they focus on creating the next world. The inescapable nature of death only made them realize the meaning of human life.

Many races in the world put their goals in the afterlife. They believed that whether a person's soul would go to heaven or to hell after death was decided by his behavior when he was alive, so some people would rather suffer in the mortal world in order to go to heaven after death, or to live a happy life after death. Only Greek people would create a new world with the enjoyment of life, so as to obtain a higher quality of life. Happiness was an important part of the ancient Greek life, and the main performance of their wisdom. The reason why they were intelligent was that the happiness of the ancient Greek was not because of the abundant land and endless treasures bestowed by nature. On the contrary, there were many mountains and barren land in the Greek continent, and the living materials were not rich. But the Greek people were good at finding happiness in ordinary life details, such as sunshine, beach, music, dance, ferocious hunting, bathing, love, competition, Even eating, drinking and sleeping made them feel the enjoyment of life.

Why do people often feel unhappy? Just as Tagore said, life is always about seeking what I can't get. I get what I can't find. ". People often ignore what we have and pursue what we don't. The first important thing in the Greek legends is that enjoying the present happiness is better than pursuing the future happiness.

According to the Greek legends, human beings were made

of soil. The limited nature of soil made the Greek realize that life needed to be cherished because of its shortness. At the same time, because of the breath of the God blew by the intelligent goddess, people had the same infinite soul and spirit as the God. People were destined to use action to pursue unlimited possibilities of life. Another important philosophy of life that legends tell us is that people can't change the length of their lives, but they can change the width of their lives with actions.

The greatest common nature of the many heroes in the myth is to "go on the road". They constantly explore, conquer, and constantly surpass themselves to achieve heroic achievements, and their actions do not need specific goals, but just act for action. There is a famous series of Argo ship heroes in Greek mythology, it says that the Greek hero Jason, in order to regain the throne of his father from his uncle, had to leave far for Corkass to take the Golden Fleece, in the help of the goddess, he built the Argo boat. This extremely arduous journey has left many heroes falling on the road, But it was this unfinished challenge that attracted many great Greek heroes, Such as Hercules, Perseus, Orpheus. If there is a realistic purpose for the throne, the other heroes are just for the adventure and the challenge themselves, and prove your heroic temperament by conquering difficulties that others fail to conquer.

The challenge of the heroes is always endless, a goal to achieve, immediately on the road to seek higher goals, to meet the higher challenges, until the end of life. One of the most typical is the famous Greek hero, he once conquered the Pegasus, killed the monster of the lion head and the dragon tail, conquered the Solormo, Amazon people and so on. These achievements are enough to make him live in the rest of his life in the atmosphere of reverence and praise. But it is not enough for Greek hero in myth, he desires to ride the Pegasus pegasus, becoming as glorious as the Olympian gods. But Zeus punished its arrogance, fell him from the Pegasus into a fool, wandering in a foreign land died. His pursuit can be described as a former slogan, life "there is no best, only better".

"There is no best, only better ." means the pursuit of excellence and continuous progress. The pursuit of excellence is one necessary part of the Greek code of heroism. Life will be meaningful while taking action. Achilles, the famous Greek hero, was once predicted by the god that he would have two fates, live long in obscurity, or die glorious on the battlefield. His choice, like all mythical heroes, would rather die in action than enjoy a happy life recklessly. For Greek heroes, people live in meaningless live while there is no creative behavior. In the 20th century, the famous French writer Roman Rolland also once said that a life without action is death. He said: "Most of people die at twenty or thirty: at this age, they only change their own shadow; subsequent life is only to imitate themselves, repeating day by day, and repeating ways become more and more mechanical and detached."

But the pursuit of excellence almost inevitably means that heroes will encounter setbacks. Throughout Greek mythology, the heroes have superhuman abilities and great achievements to retain future generations, but most of them end up as miserable as Berlerofeng. Because they always use the limitation of life to create the infinity of life value, the conflict between the two will inevitably form a tragic ending. Oedipus is the typical tragic hero of Greek mythology. Oedipus was the

son of King Laius, his parents received an oracle before his birth, in which the child would later kill his father and marry his mother. So when Oedipus was born, Laius asked the servant to throw him into the valley, but the servant pity the child and gave him to the shepherd of the neighbouring Korrentos. King Polybos was also childless and adopted the child. When Oedipus grew up, he learned from a drunk that he was not the king's own, so he went to ask him about God Apollo. The oracle did not tell him who his parents were, but predicted that he would kill his father and marry his mother. To escape the fate, Oedipus ran away from home and met an elder with four servants at a fork in the road. The two sides argued to make way, so that they began fighting. Oedipus accidentally killed the old man and his three followers, leaving one man fleeing back to Theby. Then Theby disasters never come alone. After the king's death, the demon Sphinx sat on the top of the mountain and asked the passers-by a riddle: what animal had four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs at night, people who could not answer was eaten. Many people died for this. When the Thebes were hopeless, the wandering Oedipus passed by and solved the mystery and saved Thebes. They made Oedipus the new king, and the queen married the new king. Oedipus tried to escape the fate of killing his father and marrying his mother, but the oracle was fulfilled, and he inadvertently committed the two great crimes. Before Oedipus was born, his fate of killing his father and marrying his mother was certain, no matter how many efforts he made, he cannot change his fate when he grew up. Every step of his efforts to escape his fate instead brought him a step closer to his established destiny, in the end, he completed the arrangement of his fate unconsciously: He killed his father and married his mother as his wife. Having known the truth, Oedipus chose to be blind and exile himself. The fate of the oracle is a mysterious and irreversible force hanging over the heads of the Greek gods and heroes, which is a symbol of the limitations of human power, and the human action against fate is doomed to failure. But Oedipus's struggle in the face of fate and his actions have infected generations of readers. Oedipus's resistance could not change his fate, but it showed human dignity and freedom. The Greeks believed that their fate was irreversible, and that neither god nor man could escape from their fate, but they believed that there was a more ideal state of life behind it, and that is, human freedom of action.

In the eyes of the ancient Greeks, the success of the outcome is not important, but the process of life determines everything. So they don't judge the hero by success or failure, is the free choice of action and the process of action to make the hero into a hero. The gain of the meaning of life lies in the process of action, the pursuit of the process is happy. We can also find the Greek philosophy of life in the "Faust Spirit" advocated by the 18th-century German writer Goethe: "Develop life and freedom every day, and then you can enjoy freedom and enjoy life." which is more profound enlightening for modern people in the 21st century.

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