IN THEIR VARIOUS FILM EXCURSIONS, the Beatles appropriated the power of "Beatlemania" and self-consciously established a cultural mythology to ensure their commercial and popular dominion. This chapter traces the infancy, maturity, and ultimate disillusionment the Beatles experienced during the production of their four feature films—A Hard Day's Night (1964), Help! (1965), Yellow Submarine (1968), and Let It Be (1970)—as well as the television movie, Magical Mystery Tour (1967). In addition to devoting particular attention to the cult of personality that the Beatles developed via such mythmaking ephemera as lunchboxes, Beatles wigs, jigsaw puzzles, cartoons, and coloring books, an analysis of the Beatles' films demonstrates the ways in which the band members employed A Hard Day's Night and Help! to fashion the overarching cultural identity that they would resurrect during the middle of their career in Magical Mystery Tour and Yellow Submarine. Finally, a reading of the band's filmic epitaph Let It Be argues that the Beatles' documentary failed to demythologize their cultural persona completely because their breakup created a larger sense of cultural absence that has served only to cement their mystique in the ensuing decades. Next to the Apple Boutique, Apple Electronics, and the Apple corporation's many other disastrous subsidiaries, the Beatles' films—with the notable exception of A Hard Day's Night—will surely go down in history as some of the band's least successful ventures, if only for their lack of artistry. "Although the group had achieved a remarkable amount of international success prior to its forays into film," Bob Neaverson perceptively observes, "the phenomenon of Beatlemania could not and would not have been either as substantial or as durable without the identificatory process afforded by cinema" ("Tell Me" 152). Although three of their films generated sizable box-office receipts, the Beatles' celluloid excursions usefully demonstrate their self-consciousness about themselves as a material and infinitely marketable good. Inspired by a scene in Blackboard Jungle (1955), the Beatles fashioned a chant in their earliest days in Hamburg that functioned as a rallying cry of sorts. In his 1980 Playboy interview, Lennon recalls that "I would yell out, 'Where are we going, fellows?' They would say, 'To the top, Johnny,' in pseudo-American voices. And I would say, 'Where is that, fellows?' And they would say, 'To the toppermost of the poppermost!'" (All We Are Saying 159). A combination of self-confidence and panache, their somewhat calculated vision of success would begin to change the landscape of popular culture after Brian Epstein famously strolled into one of their lunchtime performances at Liverpool's Cavern Club in November 1961. Whereas Epstein's acumen as a businessperson would prove to be illusory—his statesmanlike control of the Beatles' empire, it seems, was a mere juggling act—their new manager possessed an innate sense about how to repackage the Beatles for the wide world beyond Liverpool and the North Country. Ridding them of their notoriously unkempt hair and their leather jackets and pants, he restyled the band's image with more exacting grooming and brand new suits. Interestingly, Epstein began negotiating the Beatles' film debut well before the band's landmark appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show in February 1964. In October 1963, as Beatlemania conquered England, Epstein and the Fab Four availed themselves of the pop musical, the marketing tool that existed during the 1960s as the principal artistic venue for their most notable precursor and, by early 1964, their singular rival, Elvis Presley. In films such as G.I. Blues (1960), Girls! Girls! Girls! (1962), and Fun in Acapulco (1963), Elvis fashioned the economic model that the Beatles appropriated for three of their filmic narratives. The Beatles would take the paradigm a step further and share in the creation of the phenomenon that we now understand, via Hollywood blockbuster productions and their ilk, as the multimedia, multimarket sales campaign. Such media blitzes function as synergistic revenuegenerating engines that propel not only the film—the Ur-text of the marketing campaign—but also the soundtrack album, the sheet music, the action figures, the T-shirts, the posters, and every other imaginable bit of Beatlesrelated paraphernalia. The pace of the Beatles' genesis as self-conscious promoters of their various products dwarfs the explosion of Beatlemania itself. When Epstein negotiated their contract with United Artists for A Hard Day's Night in October 1963, they wanted to make the film "for the express purpose of having a soundtrack album," according to the film's producer Walter Shenson (You Can't Do That). In one instance, Lennon even told Epstein "we don't fancy being Bill Haley and the Bellhops, Brian" (qtd. in Barrow, "A Hard Day's Night" 5). By the end of February 1964, they came to envision the film as an opportunity for blazing trails into new marketing vistas well beyond the teenage demographic. The alacrity with which the Beatles came to perceive themselves as a marketing juggernaut also dovetails precisely with their triumphant visit to the United States in 1964. Yet by the summer of that year, the Beatles lost millions of dollars in copyright infringements across the globe, and they could do little more than stand by as idle observers while the revenues drifted into the pockets of vast numbers
of unscrupulous manufacturers. The vaguest representation of insects, of guitars, or little mop-headed men had the power to sell anything, however cheap, however nasty,” Philip Norman writes in Shout: The Beatles in Their Generation (1981). “And so, after one or two minor prosecutions, the pirates settled down, unhampered, to their bonanza” (207-8). For the Beatles, the world of film afforded them with a means for securing control of themselves as a commodity and for establishing the selfimage that would fuel their marketing engine. As Jacques Attali remarks in Noise (1985), the popular music industry’s economic emergence in the 1950s and beyond spawned a new, media-driven era of production in which acts of representation and repetition serve as the mechanisms for engendering and sustaining success. The evolution of this multiplicative marketing phenomenon “fundamentally changes the code of social reproduction,” Attali writes, and consumers—the recipients of iteration after iteration of deftly constructed signs and messages—begin responding to the “mysterious and powerful links [that] exist between technology and knowledge on the one hand, and music on the other” (146, 147).

As this awe-inspiring marketing machine developed throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, its promoters, for whom Epstein functioned as a pioneer, came to understand that the art of any effective media campaign originates in its capacity for communicating its message to a target audience. With A Hard Day's Night, the Beatles accomplished this end by deftly crafting images for each of the band members that their later films, in one fashion or another, would attempt to echo.
Lots of movies have been based on myths, ranging from the legends of ancient Greece, to the mighty displays of power of Norse gods brought to life. Here are the 10 best films to ever capture the magic of ancient mythology on the big screen.

10. “Hercules” 1997. Josh Keaton provides the voice for the title character, which is fine. Better is Rip Torn as Zeus. There’s also James Woods as Hades, which seems fitting, and Bobcat Goldthwait as Pain. Because it’s 1997.

9. “Percy Jackson & the Lightning Thief” (2010). Bringing you the mythologies of the world told in internal chronological order with a side helping of literature and culture. M. Myths and History of Greece and Rome. In each episode, we take a look at a story from mythology and explore the underlying themes and ideas. The gods are still among us. You just have to look for them. The simplest and most direct way to approach mythology is to look at its subject matter. In the broadest terms myths are traditional stories about gods, kings. In the broadest terms myths are traditional stories about gods, kings, and heroes. Myths often relate the creation of the world and sometimes its future destruction as well. They tell how gods created men. They depict the relationships between various gods and between gods and men. They provide a moral code by which to live. And myths treat the lives of heroes who represent the ideals of a society. In short, myths largely deal with the significant aspects of human and super-human existence. It is easy to forget this in reading about the many absurd, barbaric, comic, grotesque, or sentimental o
There are some halfway decent Greek mythology movies, but even those I wouldn’t wholeheartedly endorse as being great. For example: Disney’s Hercules Meg is good. The original Clash of the Titans and Jason and the Argonauts These two are the most classic examples of Greek mythology movies, and for good reason. That reason is Ray Harryhausen, who provided the groundbreaking special effects that stand up remarkably well even today. Take out the Harryhausen, though, and Clash is camp-good and Jason is just boring. The most interesting part, skeleton war aside, is the end, when Jason has gotten the Golden Fleece and the girl, and Zeus is all “Jason will have all these other magnificent adventures, surely.”