

Motivations for Mythologism in Western Novels

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Article Info (203-230)	ABSTRACT
Article type: Research Article Article history: Received: ۳۱ May ۲۰۲۳ Accepted: ۱۳ September ۲۰۲۳ Keywords: Western novel Mythologism Distortion of time abstract references	In Western civilization, the genre of the novel has turned towards mythologism, which was previously often negated and concealed due to the ideological functions of myths. Even in its early stages, the return of myth to Western novels signifies an undeniable aspect. In this process of transformation and grand narrative, fundamental backgrounds and stirrings that have significantly influenced the intellectual transformation of Western civilization and served as the triggers for ancient myths and constructs are observed within the realm of the novel. Firstly, there is a clash between the essential nature and the negation of myths. Secondly, there is the distortion of narrating events and the attainment of self-centered perceptions. Thirdly, there is the inclination towards divinity over identity rupture and accepting resulting transformations. Fourthly, there is the pursuit of justice by opposing movements (such as feminist totality and radicalism) and efforts to reform the intellectual infrastructure of Western societies. Fifthly, there is the reconstruction of ancient myths and the retrieval of constructs. The sixth stirring involves abstract references combined with tangible perceptions. These hermeneutic stirrings unveil the Western response to contemporary historical realities. Along this path, adherence to self-reflexivity and the expressive role of ancient myths is also felt.

Citation: Abbasi Fereidani Behrouz (2023) Motivations for Mythologism in Western Novels. Modern Literary Researches, 2(2) 181-201
Publisher: Association for the Promotion of Persian Language and Literature



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DOI: [20.1001.1.28211413.1402.2.2.10.6](https://doi.org/10.28211413.1402.2.2.10.6)

Introduction

In the history of Western literature, the emergence of the novel as a dominant genre was deeply intertwined with the Enlightenment's critique of the past, which often viewed mythology as archaic and inconsistent with modern rationalism. Consequently, the Western novel initially sought to distance itself from mythic frameworks. However, a significant transformation occurred as contemporary novelists began to reintegrate mythic structures into their narratives. This phenomenon—"Mythologism"—is not merely a stylistic choice but a fundamental shift in how Western literature addresses ideology, identity, and meaning. This study investigates the underlying motivations for this "mythic turn," analyzing how and why Western authors have successfully synthesized ancient mythic paradigms with modern literary forms to articulate deeper existential and cultural truths.

Method

This research employs a descriptive-analytical methodology based on a library research approach. The study deconstructs the structuralist and hermeneutic foundations of the myth-laden Western novel. By synthesizing theoretical frameworks from figures such as Mircea Eliade, Roland Barthes, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Northrop Frye, the author critically evaluates the interplay between textual intertextuality and the ideological drives of Western authors. The analysis focuses on identifying the specific semiotic and psychological mechanisms that facilitate the transition from historical realism to mythic narrative.

Results

The research identifies six fundamental motivations driving mythologism in the Western novel, which represent a conscious or unconscious response to the limitations of modernity:

1. **Substantive Opposition to the Negation of Myths:** Mythologism serves as a rebellion against the "disenchantment" brought about

by rationalism and positivism. By reasserting myth, writers challenge the hegemony of empirical logic.

۲. **Temporal Distortion (Anachronism):** Novelists utilize mythic time—which is cyclical and non-linear—to disrupt the linear, historical progression of modern narrative. This allows for the collapse of distinctions between the past, present, and future, creating a universalized space for action.
۳. **Theism vs. Identity Fragmentation:** In an era of secularization and existential alienation, myth serves as a bridge back to theistic or transcendent meaning, helping to combat the fragmentation of the individual identity.
۴. **Protest Movements (Radical Feminism):** Myth provides a powerful vehicle for feminist writers (such as Atwood and Woolf) to deconstruct patriarchal structures. By rewriting or subverting ancient myths, they challenge the historical subordination of women.
۵. **Reconstruction of Ancient Myths and Recovery of Constructs:** There is an active process of “myth-making” where ancient patterns are recovered or new mythic constructs are fabricated to provide symbolic depth that historical realism lacks.
۶. **Referencing Abstractions through Objective Perception:** Myth allows writers to transcend the literal description of objects and events. It enables the representation of abstract metaphysical and emotional concepts through concrete, symbolic mythic imagery.

Conclusion

The study concludes that mythologism in the Western novel is a sophisticated semiotic system rather than a regressive artistic trend. It represents a dialectical movement: modern writers, dissatisfied with the limitations of hyper-rationalism and the alienation of industrial society, turn to myths to recover “meaning” and “identity.” By adopting an intertextual and myth-centric approach, these authors transform the novel from a simple reporter of objective reality into a profound site of cultural and psychological synthesis. Ultimately, the integration of myth allows the Western novel to engage with the eternal aspects of human experience, effectively bridging the gap between history and the sacred.