

THE NEO-MYTHOLOGICAL MODEL AS A CATEGORY
OF MODERN LITERARY STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the neo-mythological model as a significant theoretical and methodological category in modern literary studies. The research analyzes the formation, structural organization, and functional characteristics of the neo-mythological model as a specific form of artistic interpretation of mythological traditions. Unlike classical myth, which developed as a product of collective consciousness and represented the worldview of ancient societies, the neo-mythological model emerges as a conscious reconstruction of mythological plots, symbols, and archetypal structures within modern literary discourse. Special attention is given to the theoretical concepts of M. Eliade, C. Lévi-Strauss, R. Barthes, C.G. Jung, and E.M. Meletinsky, who investigated myth as a complex cultural, semiotic, and psychological phenomenon.

The study identifies the main elements of the neo-mythological model, including archetypes, symbolic images, mythological narratives, cultural codes, and intertextual connections. The article argues that neo-mythological modeling should not be considered a simple reproduction of ancient myths but rather a creative process of transformation and reinterpretation. The results demonstrate that the neo-mythological model functions as an important analytical instrument that allows researchers to reveal deeper semantic structures of modern and postmodern literary works..

Introduction

In contemporary literary studies, the analysis of mythological structures has moved beyond the traditional understanding of myth as a system of ancient narratives and beliefs. Modern approaches consider myth not only as a historical and cultural phenomenon but also as a universal mechanism for constructing meanings, organizing artistic reality, and representing human experience. This transformation of scientific views has led to the emergence of the concept of the **neo-mythological model**, which is regarded as one of the important categories for interpreting modern and postmodern literary texts.

The neo-mythological model represents a complex system of artistic organization in which traditional mythological elements, including **archetypes, symbols, mythological plots, and cultural codes**, are reconstructed and integrated into new literary contexts. Unlike classical myth, which functioned as a collective explanation of reality within ancient societies, the neo-mythological model is created through conscious artistic transformation. It does not simply reproduce traditional mythological narratives but adapts them to express new philosophical, psychological, and social meanings.

The theoretical foundation of the neo-mythological approach is closely connected with the development of myth studies in the twentieth century. **M. Eliade** emphasized that myth should be understood as a fundamental structure of human consciousness and a mechanism for preserving cultural memory [Eliade, 1963]. **C. Lévi-Strauss**, through the structural analysis of myth, demonstrated that mythological narratives contain universal patterns of thinking that continue to influence cultural and literary systems [Lévi-Strauss, 1955]. These ideas contributed to the understanding of myth as a dynamic structure capable of transformation rather than as a fixed element of the past.

A significant contribution to the interpretation of myth in modern culture was also made by **R. Barthes**, who analyzed myth as a semiotic system producing new cultural meanings [Barthes, 1957]. Similarly, **C.G. Jung's** theory of archetypes demonstrated the importance of collective symbolic images that repeatedly appear in literary works and cultural traditions [Jung, 1969]. These theoretical perspectives created the basis for considering the neo-mythological model as an independent analytical category within literary studies.

The relevance of studying the neo-mythological model is especially evident in the analysis of twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature. Works by **James Joyce, Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka**, and other authors demonstrate that mythological structures continue to function as instruments for exploring identity, existential questions, and the relationship between individuals and society. In such texts, myth becomes not a reproduction of ancient stories but a method of creating new artistic meanings.

Therefore, the aim of this article is to examine the **neo-mythological model** as a category of modern literary studies, identify its structural components, and determine its role in the interpretation of contemporary literary texts.

METHODS

The methodological basis of this research is determined by the interdisciplinary nature of the **neo-mythological model** as a category that combines literary theory, mythology, cultural studies, semiotics, and philosophical interpretation. Since the neo-mythological model functions as a complex system of symbols, archetypes, and narrative structures within literary texts, the study applies several complementary research methods, including structural-semiotic analysis, archetypal criticism, intertextual analysis, and the comparative literary approach.

The structural-semiotic method was used to identify the internal organization of the neo-mythological model and examine the mechanisms through which mythological elements create new meanings in literary discourse. This approach is based on the theoretical concepts of **C. Lévi-Strauss** and **R. Barthes**, who considered myth as a system of signs and cultural codes rather than only a collection of ancient narratives [Lévi-Strauss, 1955]. Through this

method, the research analyzes how traditional mythological structures are transformed into symbolic systems functioning within modern and postmodern literature.

The archetypal approach was applied to investigate recurring symbolic images and universal narrative patterns that form the foundation of neo-mythological modeling. This method relies on **C.G. Jung's** concept of collective unconscious and archetypes, according to which certain symbolic structures remain stable across different historical periods and cultures [Jung, 1969]. The use of archetypal analysis made it possible to determine how ancient mythological images acquire new artistic meanings in contemporary literary works.

Intertextual analysis was employed to study the interaction between classical mythological sources and their modern literary interpretations. Within this approach, literary texts were examined as systems that contain references, transformations, and reinterpretations of previous cultural narratives. This method is especially important for understanding neo-mythological models, as they often function through the dialogue between traditional myths and new artistic contexts.

The comparative literary method was also used to analyze similarities and differences between traditional mythological structures and their modern transformations. Particular attention was given to literary works by **James Joyce, Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka,** and **Jorge Luis Borges,** whose texts demonstrate different forms of neo-mythological modeling.

The research materials include fundamental theoretical works on mythology, semiotics, and literary studies, including studies indexed in international academic databases such as **Google Scholar** and **Scopus**. The combination of these methodological approaches allows the study to define the structural elements of the neo-mythological model and evaluate its significance as an analytical category in contemporary literary studies.

RESULTS

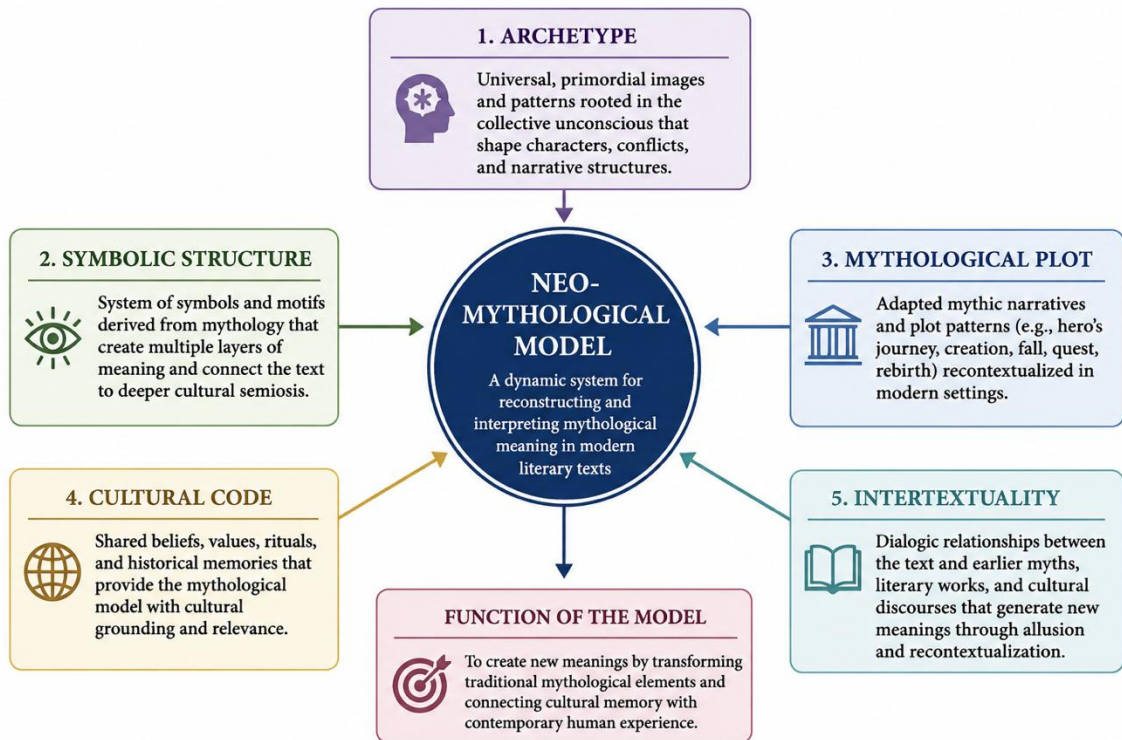
The analysis of theoretical approaches and literary materials demonstrates that the **neo-mythological model** functions as a complex analytical category that allows researchers to examine the transformation of mythological structures within modern literary texts. The results of the study indicate that this model is not limited to the direct use of traditional myths but represents a multidimensional system where ancient symbolic elements interact with new historical, philosophical, and cultural contexts.

One of the main findings of the research is that the neo-mythological model consists of several interconnected structural components. These include **archetypal images, symbolic systems, mythological plots, cultural codes, and intertextual connections**. Each of these elements performs a specific function in the construction of literary meaning. Archetypes preserve universal patterns of human experience, symbols create deeper semantic layers, while intertextual references establish connections between ancient mythological traditions and contemporary artistic interpretations.

The study shows that the concept of archetype plays a fundamental role in the formation of neo-mythological models. According to **C.G. Jung**, archetypes represent universal symbolic forms that exist within the collective unconscious and repeatedly appear in myths, literature, and cultural narratives [Jung, 1969]. In modern literature, these archetypal structures are transformed according to new social and psychological conditions, allowing authors to

























reinterpret traditional images such as the hero, the journey, transformation, and conflict between order and chaos.

Figure 1. Structural Components of the Neo-Mythological Model in Literary Studies



Another important result of the research is the identification of the difference between the traditional mythological model and the neo-mythological model. Traditional myth usually functions as a collective cultural narrative that explains the origin of the world, social values, and human existence. In contrast, the neo-mythological model operates as a conscious artistic strategy through which writers reconstruct mythological elements to express contemporary issues. Therefore, modern literary texts do not simply reproduce mythological stories but create new interpretations based on historical and cultural changes.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Traditional Mythological Model and Neo-Mythological Model

ASPECT	TRADITIONAL MYTHOLOGICAL MODEL	NEO-MYTHOLOGICAL MODEL
 ORIGIN	 Arises from collective belief and ancient oral traditions.	 Arises from conscious artistic reinterpretation in modern context.
 FUNCTION	 Explains the world, natural events, and social order.	 Explores modern existential, psychological, and social issues.
 STRUCTURE	 Stable, fixed narratives and patterns.	 Flexible, fragmented, intertextual structures.
 RELATIONSHIP WITH TRADITION	 Based on sacred authority and permanence.	 Dialogic; transforms and recontextualizes traditional myths.
 CHARACTERS	 Gods, heroes, ancestors with fixed roles.	 Deconstructed or modernized characters.
 SYMBOLS	 Have fixed, culturally stable meanings.	 Reinterpreted; gain new meanings in new contexts.
 TIME & SPACE	 Sacred time and mythical space (outside history).	 Historical time and real or fictional modern spaces.
 EXAMPLES	 Homer's epics, ancient myths, religious scriptures.	 Joyce's *Ulysses*, Kafka's works, Mann's *Joseph and His Brothers*, Borges's stories, Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, etc.

The practical application of the neo-mythological model can be observed in numerous works of twentieth-century literature. For instance, **James Joyce's "Ulysses"** demonstrates one of the most significant examples of mythological reconstruction. The author uses the structure of **Homer's "Odyssey"**, but transforms the ancient heroic journey into the representation of ordinary human experience in modern society. Through this transformation, the mythological model becomes a tool for exploring identity, consciousness, and the complexity of human existence.

Similarly, the works of **Thomas Mann** and **Franz Kafka** reveal different aspects of neo-mythological modeling. In **Thomas Mann's "Joseph and His Brothers"**, biblical mythology is reconstructed to explore historical, psychological, and philosophical questions. In **Kafka's "The Metamorphosis"**, mythological elements of transformation acquire a modern existential meaning, reflecting alienation and the crisis of individual identity.

The research also reveals that the neo-mythological model has become particularly significant in postmodern literature, where myth functions through fragmentation, reinterpretation, and intertextual dialogue. Authors such as **Jorge Luis Borges** demonstrate how mythological structures can be transformed into intellectual systems that question reality, time, memory, and human knowledge.

Thus, the results confirm that the **neo-mythological model** should be considered not only as a literary technique but also as an independent theoretical category of modern literary studies. It provides an effective framework for understanding how traditional mythological heritage continues to influence contemporary artistic thinking and how ancient symbolic structures acquire new meanings within modern cultural discourse.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the **neo-mythological model** demonstrates that this concept should be understood not only as a method of using mythological elements in literature but also as an independent analytical category that explains the mechanisms of meaning construction in modern literary texts. The results of the study indicate that the neo-mythological model represents a dynamic system in which traditional myths, archetypes, and symbols are transformed according to new cultural, historical, and philosophical contexts.

One of the central theoretical issues in understanding the neo-mythological model is the relationship between traditional myth and its modern literary reconstruction. According to **M. Eliade**, myth contains universal patterns that preserve cultural memory and express fundamental aspects of human existence [Eliade, 1963]. However, in contemporary literature, these patterns no longer function as sacred narratives but become artistic instruments that allow writers to explore psychological, social, and existential problems. Therefore, the neo-mythological model represents a transition from myth as a collective worldview to myth as a conscious creative strategy.

The structural approach developed by **C. Lévi-Strauss** provides another important perspective for interpreting neo-mythological modeling. His theory suggests that myths are organized through deep structures and binary oppositions, such as life and death, chaos and order, nature and culture [Lévi-Strauss, 1955]. Modern literary texts preserve these fundamental structures but modify their meanings. For example, the traditional heroic journey is often transformed into an internal psychological journey, where the main conflict occurs not between external forces but within the consciousness of the individual.

The importance of the neo-mythological model can also be explained through **C.G. Jung's** theory of archetypes. Archetypal images such as the hero, the shadow, the wise figure, and transformation continue to appear in modern literature because they represent universal patterns of human experience [Jung, 1969]. Nevertheless, contemporary authors frequently reinterpret these archetypes. For instance, the classical heroic figure may be replaced by an antihero who reflects uncertainty, alienation, and the complexity of modern identity.

From the perspective of semiotic theory, **R. Barthes** emphasized that myth functions as a system of signs capable of producing new meanings within culture [Barthes, 1957]. This idea is particularly significant for understanding the neo-mythological model because modern literary works often transform traditional symbols into new cultural codes. A mythological image may lose its original religious or historical meaning and acquire a new philosophical, political, or psychological interpretation.

The discussion of literary examples confirms the flexibility of the neo-mythological model. In **James Joyce's "Ulysses"**, the ancient structure of **Homer's "Odyssey"** is reconstructed to represent the ordinary experiences of a modern individual. In contrast, **Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis"** transforms the mythological motif of physical change into a symbol of alienation and existential crisis. Similarly, **J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings"** demonstrates how modern literature can create new mythological systems based on traditional archetypal structures.

In the context of postmodern literature, the neo-mythological model becomes even more complex. Authors such as **Jorge Luis Borges** use mythological symbols not only to reconstruct ancient narratives but also to question the nature of reality, knowledge, and

interpretation. This shows that neo-mythological modeling functions as a flexible mechanism capable of adapting traditional cultural materials to new intellectual environments.

Thus, the discussion demonstrates that the **neo-mythological model** occupies an important position in modern literary studies because it connects traditional mythological heritage with contemporary forms of artistic thinking. It provides researchers with a methodological framework for analyzing how ancient symbolic structures continue to influence literature and how they are transformed into new systems of meaning in modern cultural discourse.

CONCLUSION

The conducted research allows us to conclude that the **neo-mythological model** represents a significant theoretical and analytical category within modern literary studies. The analysis demonstrates that mythological structures do not disappear in contemporary literature but undergo continuous transformation, acquiring new artistic, philosophical, and cultural functions. Unlike traditional myth, which originated as a collective form of worldview and cultural explanation, the neo-mythological model appears as a conscious process of reconstructing and reinterpreting mythological elements in accordance with the intellectual demands of modern society.

The study has shown that the neo-mythological model is a complex structural system consisting of several interconnected components, including **archetypes, symbolic images, mythological plots, cultural codes, and intertextual connections**. These elements allow literary texts to establish a dialogue between ancient cultural traditions and contemporary forms of artistic expression. Therefore, the neo-mythological model functions not simply as a method of borrowing mythological materials but as a mechanism for generating new meanings within literary discourse.

The theoretical approaches of **M. Eliade, C. Lévi-Strauss, R. Barthes, C.G. Jung**, and other scholars confirm that myth possesses a universal and adaptive nature. Their concepts demonstrate that mythological structures can exist beyond their original historical contexts and continue to influence modern literary imagination. Through the transformation of traditional symbols and narratives, contemporary authors create new interpretations that reflect psychological conflicts, social changes, and existential problems of the modern individual.

The analysis of literary examples, including the works of **James Joyce, Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka, Jorge Luis Borges, and J.R.R. Tolkien**, proves that the neo-mythological model operates across different literary movements and genres. In these works, mythological elements are not reproduced in their original form but are reconstructed to explore new aspects of human identity, cultural memory, and philosophical understanding of reality.

Thus, the **neo-mythological model** should be considered an important methodological instrument for the interpretation of modern and postmodern literature. It provides researchers with an opportunity to identify hidden symbolic structures, understand the transformation of cultural traditions, and analyze the relationship between ancient mythological heritage and contemporary artistic consciousness.

Further research on neo-mythological modeling may contribute to the development of interdisciplinary studies, particularly in the fields of comparative literature, cultural studies,

media analysis, and digital humanities. In the context of rapidly changing cultural environments, the neo-mythological model remains a relevant framework for understanding how traditional myths continue to evolve and create new systems of meaning in modern society.

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