



Recent Studies in Myths and Literature, 1970-1990: An Annotated Bibliography (Bibliographies and Indexes in World Literature)

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Despite protestations to the contrary, myth criticism in literature is not dead: witness the well over 1000 illuminating sources published between 1970 and 1990 selected from thousands more and provided with succinct informative annotations. The modern study of the relation between myths and literature began in the late 19th century with publication of James G. Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and reached a high water mark with Northrop Frye's archetypal criticism beginning in the late 1950s. The end of modernism proclaimed in the late 1960s seemed also to toll the death knell for myth criticism, which was denigrated by some new critics of the post-modernist era. Instead, however, the authors here have found a wealth of recent materials, some proceeding from traditional psychological or anthropological stances and others taking new directions: studying relationships between myth and language and myth and history, viewing myth as part of the complex fabric of fiction rather than its core, and accommodating feminist theory, among other approaches. The variety of narratives accorded the status of myth has also prompted inquiries on mythopoesis, or the literary creation of myth.

The opening chapter surveys work done on the mythic or archetypal approach in general and on such mythic figures in literature as Orpheus, Oedipus, Cain, and Faust; the second chapter covers works on myth in classical literature; and the following five chapters correspond to major periods in British and American literature. Included are general studies and studies of particular authors, notably among them such giants of the past as Shakespeare, Milton, Melville, Joyce, and Faulkner, but also including such contemporary writers as Toni Morrison and John Updike. A well-constructed subject index provides access throughout to mythical figures and literary figures as well as major theories and theorists, topics, and themes; and an author index accesses the critical studies.

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