CHAPTER TWO

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Myth, history and narrative are characteristically Rushdean concepts. Therefore, knowing about these tri-concepts helps us in understanding his fictional narrative and discourse. The concern of this chapter is to propose a different set of definitions and classifications of myth and history and Rushdie’s vision concerning them. Besides, the chapter introduces the theoretical background of the thesis. Dealing with history-fiction relation, he draws on the line set up by Chinua Achebe, an important modern African fiction writer, to write back to the empire. Yet, Rushdie develops Achebe’s thoughts and ideas in his use of myth and history with relation to the realist context, and achieves a great shift in the deployment of mythical thought in addressing postcolonial themes.

If the concern of literary criticism is mainly to liberate the text from all the constraints that have traditionally assigned, Rushdie’s concern is not only to liberate the text but also to unshackle the individual from the burden of authoritarian history and other repressive systems that claim the singularity of perspective. Today more and more historians are feeling liberated from those constraints and are making the past far more indeterminate, more elusive, less real than it has ever been--thus permitting themselves to be as creative, innovative, and inventive as possible in interpreting the past. These have become the new “possibilities” of history. These possibilities are suggested by the historian/writer’s imagination and sensibility rather than by the contemporary experience. Historians now freely use such words as “invent,” “imagine,” “create” (not “re-create”), and “construct,” (not “re-construct”)
to describe the process of historical interpretation. The borderline between history and fiction is blurred. Louis Montrose explains the marriage of history and fiction more appropriately in this celebrated passage:

By the textuality of history, I mean to suggest the cultural specificity, the social embedment, of all modes of writing---not only the texts that critics study but also the texts in which we study them. By the textuality of history, I mean to suggest, firstly that we can have no access to a full and authentic past, a lived material existence, unmediated by the surviving textual traces of the society in question [...] and secondly, that those textual traces are themselves subject to subsequent textual mediations when they are construed as the ‘documents’ upon which historians ground their own texts, called ‘histories’ (qtd. in Meyer 161-62).

Far from being primitive fictions, myths are reflections of a profound reality. They dramatically represent our instinctive understandings. Moreover, they are collective and communal, and so bring a sense of wholeness and togetherness to social life. Native peoples, and indeed whole civilizations, have their own mythologies, but there appear to be common images, themes and motives called “archetypes”. Myth criticism attempts to bring out the cultural myths underlying literature. “Literature develops out of mythology,” said Northrop Frye (“Literary and Linguistic” 21). An examination of the mythic source of a work of literature reveals layers of meaning implicit in the story of which the author might be unaware. In a whole, literary works can roughly be regarded as “mythopoetic”, tending to create or recreate certain narratives. Cultural and literary criticism regards the interpretation of myth as an important dimension of cultural and literary experience.

The word “myth” is derived from the Greek word “mythos” meaning fable, story-telling or fiction to make sense of the world. Originally, “myth” meant “speech”
or “word”. The Greeks called it “mythos” and was separated out from “logos”. Yet, it can function in the realm of reality and rationality to recreate social and political meanings. Moreover, in the modern times myths are “demythologized” and used in rationalizing situations. They function as devices of social and political criticism. The language of the mythical stories was consequently figurative, metaphorical, and ambiguous. Myth was seen as a special kind of poetry-- the poetry man lives by. It was used to explain the truth, mainly the divine truth. However, Plato did not accept the mythic narrative in his Republic because he thought that a myth did not tell a trusted truth and that it was against the idea of rationality. For this, he excluded all things connected with poetic and mythic narratives.

The moral value of myth and its rational dialogue had become an issue of debate among Greek philosophers. For Plato and his followers, false myths were considered false truths. Herodotus, a Greek historian removes and debunks the false myths of his historical subjects. But Aristotelian school used “mythos” in the basic plot of writings about history and morality (Lucente 26). Aristotle emphasized the value of poetic representation especially tales about the gods which he considered to possess a truth (27). He was keen more to the ethical effect of “mythos” than truthfulness of the “mythos”. Moral order rather than the metaphysical truth of myths was the pre-dominant theme in the Aristotelian era. In other words, myth was considered as an allegorized, metaphorical version of reality.

In Platonic thought and every philosophy that was derived from it, there had been unbridgeable gulf between time and idea, the particular and the universal, becoming and being. Plato had believed that truth was on the side of the idea and that becoming was a form of illusion. He solely believed that any representation of this idea is far from truth. However, Vico eliminated the gulf between the idea and the
truth. According to him, “the truth of idea depended on the temporal extensions of the typological series” (qtd.in Coupe 120). That is, mythos precedes and informs logos. By this he gives myths significance in creating a truth. For this, it has been said that without Homer there can be no Plato. The profane imagination expresses itself initially through mythic narrative; the principles of philosophy, far from being eternal, are the result of a long process of reflection on, reaction to and rewriting of that initial imaginative expression.

In fact, historians and mythologists differentiated between two kinds of text: the sacred and the profane. While the sacred is liable to a single interpretative meaning, the profane is exposed to multi-interpretative meaning. In the view of Vico and the other anti-Platonic schools, myth is a sort of profane imagination expressing itself initially through mythic narrative. They believed that myths form the anti-type to its type. William Blake, the English romantic poet, for example, in his theory of myth believed that humanity is the source of both cosmos and creator and that it has the divine qualities of creation (qtd. in Coupe:1997: 122). The Neo-Platonists and Stoics, as well as the Epicureans, agreed that myths were not to be taken literally. In the time of Renaissance, the artists utilized the Greek mythology and expressed symbolic expression to Greek ideals of beauty in the context of Christian culture.

Myth has two kinds of interpretation; religious and allegorical interpretation. It is said to have its mode of necessity and its own mode of reality. It is not something freely invented, but a necessary mode of feeling and belief which appears in the course of history and seizes upon human consciousness. It has had a significance role in human society from its beginnings as primitive religious narrative to the recent adoption as an aid in the exploration of the unconscious mind. Rational theory of the state came to light in Greek philosophy. Thucydides was the first figure who attacked
the mythical conception of history. The elimination of the “fabulous” was one of his first and principal concerns (Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* 53). In the Greek times, the poetic language of the poets, Orpheus and Homer included the mythical narrative. Mythology thus could not be ignored because it reflected the inner passion of both the poet and the writer. By the same token, language was the tool to express these passions (Lucente 30). Mythology was an expression of faith and inner passions. The mythical tales were mediated by the literary language. Mythology was understood as the opposite part of rationality and reason.

Mythology and mythic tales are connected with inner human passions, emotions and religious faith and have a connotation of higher truth. Beside this, what can be termed as “mythologized historicism” is an inevitable fact realized by the philosopher of history, Vico who argues that language and history create each other. From this fact, the mythic discourse in history and literature arose, and “ambivalence between historical and linguistic determinism” was resolved (31). The advancing idea in the history of myth in the Greek times is the fact that myth was used as an approach to analyze and interpret history. What is significant in this study is the idea that myth was shifted from the forms of religious narrative in the ancient Greek to the socio-political narrative of the states in the modern times when myth is used for various social and political purposes. The shift was from the sacred text to the secular context.

There is consent that the history of myth begins at the time of Plato and the Sophists in Greece. The Sophists were Greek philosophers who led the Greek Enlightenment at the time of Plato and Socrates. Myth was a form of allegory and a method of meaning to preserve the authenticity of tradition and religious beliefs. This strengthened the significance of myth in interpreting the metaphysical life and social system. In this sense, it was discerned as a mode of thinking and viewed as part of the
religious system. While lived by the Greek as a mode of thinking and as a part of their cultural and religious make up, myth over history was created to serve and support the political and ideological purposes. The development of the mythic signs and mythological narration became the objects of exhaustive theoretical inquiry. Hence, a theory of primordial life was developed to relate the primitive man’s metaphorical imagination and his ignorance of phenomenal causality. According to this reading, the gods were created to explain the otherwise incomprehensible vicissitudes of the natural environment. The first mythic tales were grand precisely because of capacity for wonderment in man’s primordial, animistic ignorance.

Significantly, myth functions in the life of primitive and modern man altogether. It might be an interesting to note that the parallelism between the primitive man and his modern counterpart lies in looking at myth as a matter of faith and belief. The social life of the primitive man was grounded chiefly on the belief that his whole life is under the protection of gods who provided him with life and power. To put it differently, his life is sacrificed for this mythical force. This sacrifice was interpreted in the form of ritualistic performances, mythical narratives and moral avocations. In the same vein, mythical tradition still plays a significant role in the intellectual as well as politico-cultural and religious life of the modern man. Consider, for example, an Indian who reads the epic of *Mahabharata* or a Japanese rejoicing at *Zen* or a European invoking the Muse. Though they are similar in feelings, myth in the modern times acquires extra functional purposes. It is not only a ritualistic religious belief, but also a form of representing and reinforcing one’s identity, history, convention, morality and even nationality. Nonetheless, the traditional myths, as divine truths, served to preserve the religious authority in the ancient Greek time. The political and religious authorities claimed that they had the right to govern the people because they
were the spokesmen of the divine truths. The priests and rulers did not allow any interpretations of myths rather than “divine truths” because such interpretations may undermine their authority.

The debate about myth at the time of Plato was how to explain the relation of rational, philosophical truth to traditional, religious beliefs. The Sophists of the Greek Enlightenment attempted reconciliation by interpreting the traditional myths or theological tales treating them as allegories, revealing naturalistic and moral truths behind them. This allegorical mode of interpretation by the Sophists was criticized by Plato but found continuous favor among the Neo-Platonic and Stoic philosophers of the Hellenistic period who saw it as a method of preserving the authority of tradition as well as the religious prerogatives of the state.

The Age of Reason in the nineteenth-century witnessed an eruption of irrationality. People in Europe were beginning to think that religion was actually harmful. This period witnessed an alienation of people from humanities. They saw religion as the symptom of a sick society. Also, they started looking at mythology as a form of art because it has a power to invade our being and change it forever. In the Age of Reason, people began to look at the Bible as a form of literature. The British critic George Steiner claims that “art like certain kinds of religious and metaphysical experience is the most ingressive transformative summons available to human experiencing”. (qtd.in Armstrong 127)

Myth in the view of the modern thinkers and writers is a form of imagination and, therefore, it would be a mistake to view it as an error or inferior in the literary text. Rather, it can be treated as another form of science. James Joyce, for instance, refused to see myth as an error and insisted that it was an early, necessary and wholly
admirable phase in the development of human civilization. The rationalists believe that primitive mythopoeia was the source of all experience and expression. Since it represented the childhood of humanity, there was no reason to treat it without consideration. Vico also emphasized that mythology in its fictions and illusions strengthened the logical meaning of the real world and functioned as an illuminating means of the concrete world. He saw the fictions of mythology illuminate the “real world” by constituting all its human actions and institutions: unlike natural occurrences which display law-like, repetitive regularities which are unknowable to us because they are very alien to our form of life. Myths serve as an approach of interpreting the scientific phenomena, they shape history and culture. The religious beliefs, social customs and linguistic commonplaces of each age are reaffirmations of, and elaborations upon, primitive mythic patterns. Thus, what characterizes the counter-Enlightenment, as represented by Vico, is not the allegory of reason, but the typology of imagination.

The analysis of myth is treated by different schools of thought. Myth is simply defined as something against the truth and is contrasted with the rational thought. Some schools reject the use of myth in discourse, because its truth is not trusted. However, some schools consider the significance of myth in drawing new meanings in the social and historical discourse. Moreover, myth has occupied an important place in the field of literature and poetic language. The recent studies of myth highlighted the importance of myth which has a value in giving new social truths. Myth, according to this thought, does have a function in the literary text and it generates meanings in the social context.
There are various definitions of myth which actually represent different approaches and schools of thought. A shared characteristic of these definitions is their profound awareness of myth’s transcendental qualities and their concern of myths as patterns. Here are some definitions of myth representing different critical trends. Myth presents a story, ritual, symbol or image, which revealed initially to the conscious mind by the unconscious, either accounts for the origin and function of the universe or discloses the transcendental meaning and structure of reality and human existence (Palencia-Roth 14). Kevin Schilbrack maintains that myth is “a form of poetry which transcends poetry in that it proclaims truth” (85).

In common terminology, however, myth is a fiction; a special kind of story which tries to interpret some aspect of the world around us--something which is untrue. Scholars of mythology define myth differently, however. The Oxford Illustrated Dictionary defines myth as “a fictitious tale usually involving supernatural persons, some popular idea or historical phenomena” (542). This definition supports Hayden White’s view of myth as “a mode of discourse” (“Catastrophe” 149). Myth in this way is treated as a form of narrative and story-telling. It can also be seen as a distortion of memory of that which we do not think is necessarily true. In this regard, myth is “a fabricated tale for a purpose to convey a social or religious message”. It can, however, also be a distortion of memory. (Ronning 145)

Because myth narrates fantastic events with no attempt at proof, it is sometimes assumed that they are simply stories with no factual basis, and that the word has become a synonym for falsehood or, at best, misconception. Karen Armstrong defines myth as “something that is not true or never happened,” “unknown,” “it is about that for which initially we have no words,” and that “myth is
true only because it is effective, not because it gives us factual information” (4, 6, 8). Armstrong’s definition gives myth the function of the novel since both of them in her views attempt to invite us to see the world differently. Devdutt Pattanaik, an Indian mythologist, defines myth as “a special kind of communication that establishes a relationship between the universe, society and humans… through three avenues: narratives, symbols and rituals” (14). Pattanaik perceives that myth has several ways: “first, it is a sacred idea that is inherited over generations. Second, it is absurd, irrational, and fantastic concepts about the world that appeal to the unsophisticated” (9). He affirms that myth takes the form of narrative and allegory, and produces a power of truth. “narratives, symbols, and rituals may appear to be communications of timeless truths” (115) He also views myths as “allegories”, and that “narrative is nothing but a medium for expressing something else, nothing more… a vehicle for expressing something that is otherwise too abstract or profound complex experiences” (194). In this sense, myth is described as a world of illusions against rationality; a world of faith against the world of science; a traditional, culture-specific understanding of the world against a universal understanding of the world.

David Bidney defines myth as “a universal cultural phenomenon… [originating] whenever thought and imagination are employed uncritically or deliberately used to promote social delusion” (22). According to Bidney, “myth is not something freely invented but a necessary mode of feeling and belief which appears in the course of history and seize upon human consciousness” (381). In his view, myth is divided between belief and emotion on one hand, and concrete reality on the other. It is divided between the concepts of “religious” and “anti-religious” or between a “religion of faith” and a “religion of reason”. In other words, myth is “a reflection of an objective reality but independent of it”, and that “myth is a creative
process of human spirit”. It is “an active force” and a product of individual human and objective world images. It is also a “self-contained form of interpretation of reality” (380-386). Heavily influenced by Ernst Cassirer, Bidney boldly advocates the rationalist, historicist approach to myth criticism. Apparently, Bidney’s view of myth cuts off any kind of connection to truth. This links directly with the postmodern inflection of universality and agency, because myth is seen as a product of culture that can only be used to further ideology and not critique it. In essence, his analysis of myth is entirely consonant with postmodern appraisals of myth. The ultimate issue for myth criticism is that there is a tendency to couple myth with either archaic societies, which are typical of Myth and Ritual School, associated especially with Jane Harrison and Northrop Frye; or to render it “completely modern” and link it to ideology and sanctioning prejudices.

Laurence Coupe suggests that myth can be read as “a form of allegory” that “takes two meanings of “mythography”, the ‘rational’ which explained away myth as an inferior way of representing transcendent truth, and the ‘Euhemeristic’, which explained away myth as the idolizing of historical figures” (116). Coupe’s method which provides the allegorical material with power and breaking it down in other situations reinforces the rational approach in dealing with allegorical myth, and can be an equally modern version of “Euhemerism”, a European method which appeared in the age of Enlightenment.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, sharing many of the assumptions of psychoanalysis. He agrees with Freud that the meaning of myth is unconscious and that the spatial view of myth rather than a diachronic and temporal view is concerned with the collective psyche (3, 8). In fact, Lévi-Strauss’s views of myth come from an angle of linguistics and language structure. He holds the idea that myths are strongly structured and their
meaning is only discerned by linguistic analysis. The structure of a sentence contains a meaning and suggests an order. Based on this, a myth does provide a sense only in its relation to the other myths. Lévi-Strauss’s interest is the human psyche and mind; yet, he differs from Freud in the way that Strauss connects the conscious and the unconscious together. Above all, myths are both individual and social in scope, but they are first and foremost stories.

George L. Lucente, from the rationalist school of thought, defines myth as a story which “suggests falsehood whether intentional or innocent, strategically invoked or blindly accepted” (26). Durkheim, Ernst Cassirer and other followers of the poststructuralist school, view the “mythic sign” as merely “an autonomous body of knowledge”; a neutral body of knowledge which describes only itself and has no referential meaning in the social context. They view myth as “a thing in itself” without any direct reference to the social context “in which it is told” and that “the meaning can be discovered from a consideration of the words alone” On the other hand, functionalists insist on the social function of myth in reality. According to them, the mythic signs act as a dependent representation of something else within a particular society—social customs, a rites, and economic institutions. (qtd.in Lucente 32).

For Sigmund Freud, reading myth should be part of an ongoing of “the secular advance of repression in the emotional life of mankind” (The Interpretation of Dreams 282). For him, myth is a kind of rudimentary error; a false kind of science. Freud views myth and religion as a product of repressed desire. He is mainly interested in myths as the expression of sexual anxiety. He gives myth a sexual dimension and analyses myth from a psychoanalytical point of view. Joseph Campbell defines myth as “public dreams”; or dreams as “private myths.” This definition is
obviously indebted to Freud. In Campbell’s opinion, both dreams and myths are “symptomatic of repressions of infantile incest wishes” (*Myths to Live By* 12). Campbell orients people to the metaphysical dimension, explains the origins and nature of the cosmos, and on the psychological plane, addresses himself to the inmost depth of the psyche. Interestingly, he goes on to suggest that there is a difference in the cultural and scientific mentality between East and West as a product of two contrasting modes of thinking, the mythical mode and the secular one. This difference, according to him, is the result of the confrontation between divine authorities and ideals of religion on the one side and scientific system and secularity on the other side. Don Cupitt defines myth as “typically, a traditional sacred story of anonymous authorship and archetypal or a universal significance” (qtd.in Coupe 5).

Hence, myth can be examined through three main terms or conditions: paradigm, perfection and possibility. This approach to myth can be utilized in the literary analysis of the text dealing with myth as theme and strategy. In the modern literature, myth has been demythologized for the sake of secular purposes. The idea of “demythologization.” is usually associated with modernity. The concluding view of philosophers and thinkers in this field suggests that myth is “the expression of man’s understanding of himself in the world in which he lives” In accordance with this, Anne Ronning maintains that “mythic paradigms provide the reader or spectator with a series of familiar reference points and a set of expectations … as instructive shorthand”. (145)

Myth is a human emotional expression of man’s experience in the world through the conventions of language he is accessed to. Ernst Cassirer has alluded to this fact when he defines myth as “an emotional image, an experience of emotion in which the real is mixed with the ideal”. He adds that “myth is an interpretation of
harmony between man and nature” and that “between language and myth there is not only a close relationship, but a real solidarity. If we understand the nature of this solidarity, we have found the key to the mythical world” (The Myth of the State 17). Thus, myth is symbolic and metaphorical. It has a truth of its expression in primitive word-magic, ritual magic and image-magic. To these observations, one must add that myth is extremely old in human history and that it arises from the deepest recesses of men’s minds.

On this basis, myth acquires a pragmatic function. By pragmatic function is meant that myth deals with problems in a sensible, practical way instead of strictly following a set of ideas. That is, myth has a symbolic reality. Myth expects reality to exist because myth is a matter of emotional and spiritual force. It is also said that, “myth is nothing but one aspect of language. Language is logical and rational, but on the other hand it is also a source of illusions and fallacies” (18). Actually, these writers built their argument on the presupposition that myth is, first and foremost, a method of representing beliefs and ideas.

Lillian Feder defines myth as “a social or psychological device and also as a poetic symbol or metaphor” or “a narrative structure of two basic areas of unconscious [and conscious] experience which are related” (10). Feder’s definition ascribes the creation of myth to the instinctual drives and the repressed unconscious wishes and fears as well as the remnants within the individual consciousness of the early stage phylogenetic development in which myths are created. Mythical characters reflect the human qualities even in dealing with immortals and that the narrative materials, the portrayal of conflict and sorrow, and the resolution of revelation are all reflections of human concerns. On the basis of this definition also, myth acts as a stimulus and illustrious factor of the human psyche. In this regard, fiction becomes
the only space or world which can combine the repressed and the repressor, the realistic and the symbolic, and the signified and the signifier. In the words, myth is an alternative value to power of reason and rationality. People can comprehend reality not only through reason and rationality, but also through the emotional and imaginary reality. Therefore, myth has a function of symbolism which suggests and stands for new modes of reality in the meaning of freedom, plurality and finally secularity.

Frey’s approach then is based on the fact that there are two major ways to apprehend reality: reason and emotion. Myth has a value, especially in literature and fiction in the sense that it contains and bears linguistic, poetic, literary, moral, religious and also secular value. In addition, myth can be taken either as a positive force of Reason or an active force of Emotion. The two sides of myth, the rational and the emotional, can be taken as a symbolic expression of reality. We can re-imagine reality through the either aspects or dimensions of myth.

Most importantly, Frye views mythology as “the total structure of human creation conveyed by words, with literature at its centre”, and that “such a mythology belongs to the mirror, not the window. It is designed to draw a circumference around human society and reflects its concerns, not to look directly at the nature outside” (Creation and Recreation 7). Mythology, then, means “lying” against the truth. This notion can be applied to literature because it describes things only approximately. In other words, myth does not give an exact or real description of a natural phenomenon. They mirror only some part of the truth and not the whole of it. Literature is also a lying form which fits into the mythical forms of reality representation. To put it more simply, myth is a basis of reality in literature and a mode of discourse.

The central argument of Frye is that myth which means “untrue” is the field of literature because it has to do with creation and recreation. Realism, on the other
hand, is considered non-creative because it is based on recognizable knowledge. According to Frye, “our real historical past is not ‘the past of historical record,’ but rather it is ‘our repressed social past’” (13). To put it differently, myth is an effective method in recreating the historical and social reality since this reality is not based on real facts, but rather is a product of repressed culture and history. Our reality is consisted of our repressed dreams in the past. Desires for change and transformation in society reflect the past repressed myths and dreams. So, literary work has the meaning of recreation of those visions which have already existed in our unconsciousness. Ultimately, the human recreation of arts and social order is seen as analogous to the God’s Creation stories in the Bible.

On the other hand, Peter Heehs defines myth as “a set of propositions often started in narrative forms that is accepted uncritically by a culture or speech-community and that serves to found or affirm its self-conception” (3). Myth in this sense includes most traditional narratives as well as some modern literature. More generally, it consists of any sets of related propositions whose “truth” is not demonstrated by working of logos. For this, myth still occupies a great significance in the age of science and reason as it was in the age of legend and superstitions. It was a mistake to regard myth as an inferior mode of thought. It is true because it is effective, not because it gives factual information. The purpose of it was to make people more fully conscious of the spiritual dimension that surrounded them on all sides and was a natural part of life. Primarily, myth was to show people how they could return to this archetypal world, not only in moments of visionary rapture, but in the regular duties of their daily lives. Mythology was used to externalize the metaphysical and transcendental forces, especially the forces of life and death. Keran Armstrong said
that “mythology was … designed to help us cope with the problematic of human predicament and, like religion, it provides us with ecstasy”. (3)

Myth is of great importance because it liberates us from the slavery of ideology. It “has a power to shape our life and it guides us to truth. It functions as a form of dramatic story that expresses the desires of man and his yearnings for a perfect life” (McDonald 141). Myths are the opposite of science, but they are a central part of it. They are not lies nor are they detached stories. They are imaginative patterns, networks of powerful symbols that suggest particular ways of interpreting the world. They shape its meaning. With the advent of rationality or the logos, myth loses ground and is driven back into the shadows. Yet, the ground lost by myth is not always won by reason. Further, myth has a special significance in the social and political life. Also, we realize the significance of it in the fictional work, where it functions as a tool of criticism and disruption against the official institutions. It is a form of falsity; it has the quality of being false, untrue or unreal. However, myth has a truth. The truth of myth consists not in its factual knowledge, but in its dramatic effect. It is a dramatic value in the sense that it touches our emotions and makes us feel excited. Also, it moves us towards the typical models of human figures and “charged ideals”. Another important point here is that the dramatic effectiveness of myth on us occurs in the realm of unconsciousness. This is then the value and importance of it.

The most alarming feature in the development of modern political thought is the appearance of the power of mythical thought. The predominance of mythical thought over rational thought in some of our mode in political systems is obvious. The value of myth, here, is that it comes to explain the irrationality of the rational political thought. Myth functions then as a reconciliatory tool bridging the irrational truth with
the rational fallacy. The power of mythical thought as a cultural force is observed in its controlling effect in the formulation and re-formulation of the postcolonial and postmodern socio-political realities. This may also explain celebrity of novel as the dominant literary genre in the modern and postmodern eras.

Myth has existed in every society. Indeed, it would seem to be a basic constituent of human culture. Because the variety is so great, it is difficult to generalize about the nature of myths. But it is clear that in their general characteristics and in their details a people’s myths reflect, express, and explore the people’s self-image. The study of myth is thus of central importance in the study both of individual societies and of human culture as a whole. Most importantly, myth was linked in meaning with historical places and historical persons. The function of mythical thought is to bring the ‘unconscious’ as an encounter to the ‘conscious’. Socio-political authorities are also linked in a process that brings new collective consciousness out of collective unconsciousness. In this respect, the content and meaning of myth shift and change according to the changes of time. For instance, new myths have appeared in our time today, such as the myth of nation, the myth of economy and the myth of globalization. In McDonald’s view, every culture seems to have some variation of the underlying myth. Politics is not necessarily the primary medium of mythological conceptions. In our day, the economic sphere acquires a mythical conception, especially with emergence of the capitalist ideologies. Here, myth and authority dwell hand in hand, but in a more concealed one. (144)

Myth works in a plurality of motives and involves all mental faculties. Thus, we find that the elements of imagination and creative imagination are involved in its meaning. It has a creative meaning even in the concrete world, and that myth not only may refer to particular determined and conferred things, but also it refers to any class,
thing or object. It has a wide and large world of reference. Every object in our world may be read as a bearer of mythical meaning. In other words, every object can be a target of myth. It is a “universal cultural phenomenon” (Bidney 383). On this basis, the modern writers utilize the concept of myth to suggest particular kinds of ideas and reality, namely secular ideas. For the modern fictional writers, it has become a project of technique for social transformation. It plays a crucial role and assumes various functions in the twentieth-century literature. It can function as a social and psychological device or a poetic symbol or metaphor. On this basis, the characters of myth can be gods, men or monstrous creatures with the qualities of both. Yet, they reflect the human qualities even in dealing with immortals. To sum up, mythical acts and mythic narrative cannot be realized for a reader if it is represented in a supernatural realm. Myths are explained in the realm of human possibilities because man is the main concern. The hero of myth in a certain mythic plot reflects man’s persistent desire for extraordinary power, vision, and control. “We identify the hero of myth not only because he acts our unconscious wishes and fears but also because in so doing he performs a continual rite of service for the rest of mankind: he asks our essential questions and answers them” (Feder 11).

The writer in the contemporary literature exploits myth to exhibit the desires, wishes and ambitions of people in reference to their reality or social and political order. Most prominently, myth in the postcolonial literature has occupied an important position. A postcolonial novelist in particular makes an effective use of it in revealing the forbidden wishes and desires and he directs these desires against the systems of domination. His goal behind this is to re-establish the social and political order in a manner that it allows people to express all they wish, fear or desire. He uses
myth to criticize the chaotic situations. He uses myth to produce new meanings in the realist context.

To Barthes, “myth hides nothing: its function is to distort” (*Mythologies* 128). Myths always undergo some kind of metamorphosis, allowing an author to investigate the artistic process by transferring events from the everyday world to that of the supernatural. They are necessary for “constructing mythical narratives and celebrating the power of imagination to search for new possibilities away from the literal narrative” (Goodman 73). In other words, they are a narratalogical way of explaining the world around us, either celebratory or explanatory, when retold to later generations. This can be linked to the idea that myth is sometimes used as a disguised political message or comment on the contemporary world. It has a psychological meaning revealed in the acts of the characters in a play or a novel. According to Jungian psychology, a hero performs superhuman deeds, represents the ego conquering the shadow, the part of conscious mind which contains unacceptable traits of personality. The brief idea of Jung’s theory is that the character in his acting tries to reveal the unconscious desires and traits to conquer the difficulties in the conscious mind and state. However, the most obvious function of myths is the explanation of facts, whether natural or cultural. The imaginative power of the myth lends credibility to the explanation and crystallizes it into a memorable and enduring form. It is then is an objectification of man’s social experience, not of his individual experience. The motives of mythical thought and mythical imagination are in a sense always the same. In brief, myth has two main functions: to answer one’s desire and dreams or to justify an existing social system and account for traditional rites and customs. It employs stories about specific actions and sets of events as fictitious narratives working in the social and historical realm. This function directs the attention to the significance of
myth in establishing the social decorum and correctness. It is purposely made to make sense of things in the human life so that man can apprehend his position in the world and his relations with the other elements in the world, religiously, ethically and socially.

As two synonymous entities, myth and legend have been commonly used interchangeably. In fact, they have different meanings. While myth is described as an invented story to explain some extraordinary natural event puzzling to primitive people, legend is an invented story in the form of history, containing a kernel of truth, however, distorted, which historical and archeological research may reveal (James 437). Also, they differ in function. The function of myth is to confirm belief, to give efficacy and effectiveness to ritual and to stabilize the established order, not to satisfy curiosity. Their “truth” lies in the part they play in conserving those things upon which the life and well-being of society depend, and for the primitive mind, this is a more fundamental concern than the truth of history. We can say that myth is a source of ideas whereas legend is ideas translated into history. However, both of myth and legend have values and meanings in history. Myths usually superimpose on the legends. While legends may be literally true, myth is seen as a synonym for “illusion,” usually to contrast with “reality”. However, though myth is not true or real, it directs toward the truth, and this truth has a value. This value is the meaning that it carries. For example, the agenda of contemporary politics today would become a myth tomorrow and then history and after that legend. A myth gives a religious explanation for something: how the world or a particular custom began. The story is timeless in that the events are symbolic rather than just the way it happened. A legend, on the other hand, is a story which is told as if it were a historical event, rather than as a symbolic narrative or an explanation for something. It is, however, a story
from the past about a subject that was, or is believed to have been, historical. It is always associated with a particular place and time in history. In fact, when a myth loses its status as part of a religious system, it often takes on traits more typical of folktales, with its formerly divine characters reinterpreted as human heroes, giants, or fairies. Myth, legend, saga, fable, and folktale are only a few of the categories of traditional stories.

In the same direction, symbol, archetype and myth share the common feature of representation but they differ in the degree and scope of referential trope. All of them represent certain ideas or objects but they differ in their spatiality and modality. An image becomes a symbol when it is usually associated with a certain object, thing, idea, or event. Likewise, a symbol turns into an archetype because of its recurring referentiality to a particular object, idea, person or event. This archetypal event or figure attains a mythical status with the passage of time as it gains a historic and cultural association and thematic expression.

A symbol is something such as an object, picture, written word, sound, or particular mark that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention. In Jung’s view, a sign stands for something known, as a word stands for its referent. He contrasted this with symbol, which he used to stand for something that is unknown and that cannot be made clear or precise. Kenneth Burke in his book, Language As Symbolic Action, defines symbol as a verbal parallel of the model of existence. “Reality,” Burke stated, is actually a “clutter of symbols about the past” (5). In his opinion, the symbol is a way of associating words with experience, which however are not identical to the experience. In the broadest sense, symbol is anything which signifies something; in this sense all words are symbols. In discussing literature, however, the term “symbol” is applied only to a word or phrase that
signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or has a range of reference, beyond itself. Some symbols are “conventional” or “public”: thus “the Cross,” the Red, White, and Blue,” and the “Good Shepherded” are terms that refer to symbolic objects of which the further significance is determinate within a particular culture (Abrams 311). The Oxford English Dictionary defines symbol as “a thing regarded by general consent as naturally typifying or representing, or recalling something possession of analogous qualifies or by association in fact or thought.” Of course, for anthropologists, “general consent” is limited to the culture in which the symbol under attention is located, and the culture’s analogy is another culture’s puzzle. (Turner 151)

Symbols are noticeably active in three types of social processes: political, ritual, and therapeutic. Much anthropological literature in the past few years has been concerned with symbols in social dynamics. Symbols play a significance role in the social and political realm. They have a distribution in the text and a power. The systematic study of dynamic interdependence between power relations and symbolic actions in complex society is the ground of literary and historical analysis. Some anthropologists have also concentrated on the social and political role of symbols. Abner Cohen, for example, defined symbols as “objects, acts, relationships or linguistic formations that stand ambiguously for a multiplicity of meanings, evoke emotions, and impel men to action” (23). Cohen and others saw culture as made up of symbols interpreted by individuals and used for their expression of the self. Geertz’s The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays (1973) worked on the idea of culture as a particular symbolic system promoted by a social group, assisting the group in its way of thinking and looking at the world. As a set of symbolic statements, culture shapes and gives meaning to human perceptions and behaviour. And rather than the
meanings of symbols being fixed or given, they are inter-subjectively created by the members of the group together. As such, they are a source of group negotiation. Geertz views this negotiation of meaning as fundamentally a social process which occurs, “not in the head, but in that public world where people talk together, name things, make assertions, and to a degree understand each other” (213).

On the other hand, an “archetype” is: “arche” from Greek philosophy the principle, cause, source, or origin of things; beginning or ultimate principle and “type” kind. So “archetype” means “original kind” -- an original model from which other similar people, objects or concepts are created, copied, or patterned. Archetypes are recurring images that come out of the collective unconscious which pass through all human history and culture. Therefore, common images and patterns in literature are a reflection of a total human experience. The common archetypes are the quest, rite of passage, the innocent child, wise old man, the martyr and the hero.

The origins of the archetypal hypothesis date back as far as Plato. Jung himself compared archetypes to Platonic ideas. Jung outlined five main archetypes: the Self, the regulating center of the psyche and facilitator of individuation; the Shadow, the opposite of the ego image, often containing qualities with which the ego does not identify, but which it possesses nonetheless; The Anima, the feminine image in a man’s psyche; the Animus, the masculine image in a woman's psyche; the Persona (how we present to the world) usually protects the Ego from negative images (acts like a mask). The archetype can be also defined as an ideal example of a type, quintessence or epitome. In Jungian psychology, an archetype is known as an inherited pattern of thought or symbolic imagery derived from the past collective experience and present in the individual unconsciousness.
There is a list of categories related to the term, “archetype”. One category is tools-archetype: in Jungian theory, primal character and predisposition to behavior within collective unconscious of individuals. Another category is mental states, processes, and behavior-archetype: Jungian characterization of fundamental personality trait held in collective unconsciousness. Furthermore, is the category of notions, ideas, and methods-archetype: original model from which all others follow esp. perfect example of type. Also, the literary category-archetype: character embodying basic, universal human qualities. There are also myths, legends, and fables-archetype: original or ancestral idea or type. Archetype is a primordial image, character, or pattern of circumstances that recurs throughout literature and thought consistently enough to be considered universal. Because archetypes originate in pre-logical thought, they are held to evoke startlingly similar feelings in reader and author. An archetypal theme is the passage from innocence to experience (Abrams 12). “Archetype”, is simply understood as a symbol, theme, setting, or character type that recurs in different times and places in myth and literature. Examples of archetype offered by the supporters of myth criticism include such recurrent symbols as the rose, the serpent, and the sun; common themes like love, death, and conflict; mythical settings like the paradisal garden; stock characters like the femme fatale, the hero, and the magician; and some basic patterns of action and plot such as the quest, the descent to the underworld, or the feud. The most fundamental of these patterns is often said to be that of death and rebirth, reflecting the natural cycle of the seasons.

More recently, critics have been wary of the reductionism involved in the application of such unverified hypotheses to literary works, and more alert to the cultural differences that the archetypal approach often overlooks in its search for universals. In the literary and fictional forms of writing, a writer seeks to re-establish
the archetype or the archetypal because they exist in the unconscious process of the writer. Thus, the world of concrete experience in the realm of humanity can take a form of myth, fiction and fantasy because the ultimate aim is to reestablish the idealized world at the idealized social life.

Symbols, myths and archetypes are interrelated in their symbolic functions in the unconsciousness area. Symbol in its dynamic conception works in the collective unconscious and its main reference is to reach the archetypal. This is, then, the myth of archetypal in the unconscious. In this view, the idealized figure (archetypal) or even mythic values and features exist in our unconsciousness. Therefore, any mythic discourse can reflect unconsciously the ideal archetypes that live with us in the realist world, even in the form of semiotic representation. The most important idea here is that myth is related to the psychological aspect which has always the qualities of motivation, creation and dynamism. The impact of an archetype affects us because it makes a feeling in us towards an idealized figure. The archetypal image makes it possible for us to see a similar character in the situation. The significance of myth lies in its power and its influence on reality. It creates in us a desire to make reality perfect and meaningful.

Archetypes are widely used in literature from the time of Shakespeare till recently. There are many writers and poets who used the term “archetype” in their works, some visible instances are Shakespeare, W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot. Above all, myths, archetypes and symbols have vastly different meanings in different times and places. They might be better be seen as vehicles for helping people understand new patterns of truths and recurring themes or character types out of real and fictional stories.
In more general terms, myth can be treated as any set of unexamined assumptions that does not have scientific and empirical features. In fact, there are two approaches to study myth and history, one approach views myth and history as two separate fields or two conflicting concepts which explain two different data. This approach suggests the eradication of myth from record. The other approach suggests a resolution and common complementary interplay. To avoid this conflict by attempting to keep myth and history entirely separate may not be possible. The tension can be resolved solely through a dialectical reconciliation. Peter Heehs believes that the major idea is that myth and history are considered as one interfused concept; they explain each other because, in his view, they are not antithetical concepts. (15) William H. McNeil asserts that the so-called scientific history is itself the result of a belief system with unquestioned assumptions. He argues that all the scientific systems included one mythic and matter of belief system (qtd. in Heehs 3). This view tells us that myth can be considered as one source of trusted knowledge and reliable account because it contains a truth in it. The difference between the two terms is that the scientific myth is based on concrete evidence whereas myth is simply a matter of belief which has not been examined.

The question, yet, is how we can use myth to interpret history. In order to answer the question we should understand that myth originally derives from the human history; from the primitive to the modern history. Also, many of the historical events and tales are rooted to myths, namely social, sexual and religious myths. Also, historical characters can be connected to mythical or analogous characters. Since historical incidents and characters have sometimes roots in myths, we can use myth to analyze history. Further, myth can be used to interpret the political events because political agendas and ideas also might be based on myths or, in other words, invest
myths for political interests. In short; myth, society and politics are three interrelated avenues and interpret each other. It seems that it is not surprise to interpret history by myth because history is based on the basic foundations of society. Yet, the question to be posed here is how we can use mythic narrative in history as factual knowledge. To put it succinctly, to what extent that myth and metaphor can be accepted in the representation of scientific and historical knowledge.

However, this tension is soon resolved if we think that both the scientific knowledge and mythical thought are mediated by language and since it is not possible to exclude the myth and metaphor from language. Language can be a meeting-point that connects myth to history or false truths to true incidents. Mythic tales themselves survive in language. Since language carries a mythical narrative and metaphor, it serves to create history. The most important idea here is, first, that language works in the historical narrative as a creative tool. Second, the historical discourse without mythic language would be incomplete and insufficient. The major reason behind the use of mythic narrative in historical writing is because the historical discourse is insufficient by itself.

In other plane, there are two kinds of discourses: the realist discourse and the mythic discourse. Bu the two are not in fact considered as having contradictory operations. Even the realistic discourse carried within it the mythical element. Similarly, the mythical form reflects the realistic features in the world or society, and the mythical elements carry within them some features of realism. The mythical discourse does not contradict with the realistic one. Rather, they enrich each other. The two kinds of discourse together serve to apprehend and perceive the historical moments of perception. In other words, myths and mythology operate as emotional elements that enrich realism. The mythic discourse and realistic discourse provide us
with knowledge, truths, facts and values. History and its facts or truths all are a product of language creation which is pregnant with symbols and metaphor. Not only this, but also language contains the inner passions of the writer of history himself, they are expressed through the mythic element in the language which draws the truths and realities of history. Our common idiom considers myth to be false while history is, or aspires to be, true. However, what seems true to one historian will seem false to another, so, one historian’s truth becomes another’s myth, even at all moment of utterance. While myth implies timeless historicity, history refers to eventual temporality:

Myth […] is not concerned with human actions at all… Hence, when a myth is couched in what seems a temporal shape, because it relates events one of which follows another in a temporal shape, the shape is not strictly speaking temporal, it is quasi-temporal. (Collingwood 15)

Some critics and scientists view myth as a means of escaping from unpleasant facts of history. This would imply that we have to face the possibility that “scientific” history is not only engaged in “myth breaking”, but also in “myth-making”—a conclusion already drawn by postmodernists. And, of course, the image of scientific history would only get worse with the deconstruction of the privileged object of “scientific” history since the latter half of the nineteenth-century itself---the nation---as a myth. This is exactly the predicament historians have found themselves in over the last decade or so. History for Nietzsche is “an everyday melody” and beauty itself is “super historical” aesthetics of life. He seeks a fictive representation of history. From history, we grasp beauty and aesthetics of life. A historian, according to this thought, should seek the aesthetics of history and elements of beauty other than the pure factual events. Such a thought opens the doors to mythicizing and fictionalizing
history. Based on this thought, myth can be used in narrating history because history should contain some aesthetic features of beauty.

Nevertheless, the challenge is how to understand myth in the light of “dynamic meaning” of history. This is a crucial point because myth cannot be separated from history and its dynamic meaning. It would be also more crucial to know that the seemingly “stable” meanings of myth, as traditional beliefs, accord with the change of meaning of history. Myths would be activated to respond to the dynamic meaning of history. It would be also true to say that the old and ancient myths can echo the contemporary historical events and meanings. It would be interesting to understand myth in the light of dynamic meaning of history, precisely because myth has a social and political function in our contemporary life. In brief, it might be said that myths are not descriptive of things, but expressions of an act. It should be said here that fiction is the fertile field in which myth activates its meanings.

Fiction and myth are two means for one end, that is, the human nature and its possibilities. Human nature may be portrayed through fiction when it acquires a historically dominant status, or when men become capable of preferring the temporal and the cumulative reality of their own actions to the everlastingness of gods and supernaturals. The relation between myth and fiction is like that between the linear and the cyclical, the character and the type, the incredible and the possible, the ideal and the idea, the sacred and the secular, and the far off and the nearby. Campbell states that the main function of the artist is to reflect his mythical representation of life and society. The artistic work is supposed to include all kinds of social and religious ideas in a way that he unites the myth of past with the myth of present, considering
the concept of time and timelessness. “The artist’s eye has a mythical slant upon life” 
(The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology 21). In the same vein, it is said that the novel is basically concerned with describing the career of individual in search of some coherence and identity within society and himself.

Frye proposes that myth is closely related to the work of literature. In his view, the Bible, the sacred myth, is nothing but a form of literature. His view is that the religious text is read as an important stage of the human development of thinking and an advanced stage of mythic thinking. For him, the religious figures become the symbolic space in which the collectivity thinks itself and celebrates its own unity. All literature must be read as a symbolic meditation on the destiny of community. According to him, there are two ways of approaching the notion of creation: traditional myth of creation (the biblical story of creation), and man’s own work of creation in this world, human civilization and the literary creation. Human (re)creation, literary or civilizational, is in his view analogous to God’s (Creation and Recreation 50). Frye, in brief, represents the literary view of creation which can achieve the secular goals of change and social transformation. In a similar vein, Devedutt Pattanaik differentiates between two kinds of narrative: the sacred and the historical. The sacred narrative, he indicates, has a close connection to the people’s life, especially religious life (14). On the other hand, the historical narrative is about the past events. The novel is the effective mediation which connects myth and society. It translates the ambitions and desires of society and draws its archetypal examples to be modeled. However, myth cannot be entirely detached from the real conditions of the societies in which those myths were developed. Myth corresponds to social system and establishes symbolic and organic links between the ephemeral reality of human experience and the everlasting quality of the supernatural.
The emergence of the modern novel represents a break-up with the mythical cosmos. The mythical hero, as a consequence, becomes a character in a novel. When satire declares that myth was “historicalized”, it means that “a new public had appeared”; a public which showed an interest in history and was looking for a record that could account for things that really happened in the past (Zeraffa 81). Since fiction is primarily a matter of language, the content of myths was adapted by romance writers to fit into the social life precisely. There was a transformational progress in the paradigm function of myth from its concrete conceptualization to a new contextual meaning. It in the new approach becomes “a mode of thought with a distinct relation to the history of ideologies rather than as merely an immature genre” (Lucente 33). In the twentieth-century myth, the mythic sign moves from the social and historical context into the literary analysis and becomes a part of literary construct and a concept which generates meaning.

Nonetheless, myth in the traditional school of thought was conceived of as an independent body of knowledge. The mythic discourse in the modern school of symbolism has been given a universal and effective job in the literary analysis in a way that combines its independence and autonomy with its new universal dimension. Hermeneutically, the theological text is regarded as a product of a figurative language and syntactic structure which give the text its beauty. Theology is looked at as a form of literature since language functions as a creative tool in both sacred and literary text. Mythological figures are themselves products of creative fantasy. Language is the meditative factor in this creation. Also, it has a power of creativity which not only creates a world of fantasy but also gives us pictures of abstract, scientific understanding of the unconscious process. Myth is an expression of fantasy translated through language.
Contemporary criticism may understand mythic discourse as originating, not in opposition to the seemingly demystified worldly knowledge of realism, but in interaction with it. In fact, myth and realism can together work in reality without separation. In the universe of modern fiction we find them working hand in hand without any contradiction in meaning. It is believed that T.S. Eliot is the first literary figure in the twentieth-century who used the mythical method in literature. The purpose of his method was to create possibilities of life in the modern world. He reflected on the possibilities of the mythical method as an alternate to the narrative one.

One aspect pertaining to myth, politics and social transformation is the aspect of immortality. Immortality in myth is connected with the human unconsciousness. In the mythical plot, it is analyzed as a symbolic expression of freedom and exuberance or a symbolic shift from the world of experience to the world of innocence and romance. Immortality can also function in politics as a symbolic reflection of transformation and a metaphor of change. We have then two kinds of myth: psychological myth and socio-political myth. In other words, immortality in myth works in two plains: the individual and the social. In the case of the individual, though naturally mortal he is, man struggles for immortality through different forms of creation. Myth satisfies his yearning for immortality as a mythical figure. In the socio-political and collective plain, mythical thought represents the social and political metamorphose. The mythical method followed in fiction blends the mythical with the realistic, the fictional with the factual, and the past with the present. Language is the instrument at the hand of the modern novelist to create myth as a response to socio-political issues. The metaphorical language, and by extension mythical language, is unique and it is the most effective medium to create a mythical universe and
allegorizes the political situation. The novelist uses the mythical language which contains images, symbols and metaphors to strengthen the meaning in the text and to create the mythical pictures that serve his ideas he wants to convey to the audience.

It is said that there is nothing like a pure realistic truth because reality is also part of the symbolic world. A novel brings these seemingly contradictory elements in a single setting. Further, the novel is the ‘truth’ and “falsehood” or the “real” and the “mythic”. To put it differently, fiction avoids absolutism and celebrates possibility. The fictional truth is neither determinate nor singular because any fictional work is a representation of the relationship between the real world and the mythical world. Another major point is that a mythic discourse forms fantasy. This fantasy can function as an element that strengthens the world of realism. There are symbols and metaphors within culture. There is, then, an interaction between these major elements: society, myth and culture. The product of this interaction is to reproduce reality and recreate new perceptions of social life. Myth and realism are two important elements in the literary text. They function, not as oppositional, but as operational literary elements.

“Intertextuality” is another expression of myth and has a function in the relationship between myth and history. Any universal myth has been interacted with other myths. Intertextualization acts, not as a problem, but a solution in this relationship. Marina Warner does not believe that “myth is something that happens behind our backs, as it were”. Warner insists that we have the capacity, as tellers and retellers as earlier, interpreters and reinterpreters , to maintain the interaction of myth and history” (14). The modern novelist investigates the contemporary problems of man and society by using the mythical elements in their works. The aim is to explore
the emotional and psychological aspect of the individual and modern society in relation to the universal conditions and demands of civilization.

Thus, myth and fiction are two interrelated elements in modern literature. Myth has become an effective tool of social and political expressions in the world of modern novel, namely the postcolonial novel. This issue becomes a central subject of study among the reviewers and critics in the postcolonial context. In his study of the meaning and uses of myth in the postcolonial novel, Erick Uskalis divides myth into two elements, paradigm and symbol. He maintains that both elements can be a form of resistance to the hegemonic narrative of the state. He thinks that “myth offers a counter to this monologic form and encodes dissent in the context of entrenched power of formations” (2). Therefore, myth functions in the novel as an expression of refusal of the official narrative and as a method of dissent to social and political power. Further, a mythical form has two functions: one in the text as a technique that creates ruptures and the other one outside the text producing social and political alternative to the official dominant order.

The mythical narrative form can be interpreted and read as a symbol that stands for a desire of social and political change. For instance, myths in Chinua Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah* and *The Interpreters* function not as a version of a real realist narrative which corresponds to a real historical condition, but rather as a symbolic solution and resolving of political impasses. The myth also functions through various agents such as language, metaphor, symbol and memory which activate its power in the text. It functions in the postcolonial narrative, particularly, as a symbolic alternative to the state hegemony. Particular contexts of class configuration and state hegemony define the way myths are developed in postcolonial novels. It acts in the postcolonial context as a functional narrative and is used as a
controlling form of counter-narrative technique. Meenakshi Mukherjee identifies two uses of myth: the conscious and the unconscious. Myth as a conscious use is an easily recognized modern trend and literary device or method of T.S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*, and of Joyce in *Ulysses*. Each of them uses mythical situations or characters in a modern context, thereby seeking to illuminate the predicament of contemporary man, viewing him in a large perspective of time. The unconscious use of myth appears in literary works where the writers may not have been aware of using a mythical situation, but discovered by critics (*The Twice Born Fiction* 132-133). Accordingly, this research develops a reading of the conscious use of myth by Rushdie, who mostly employs myth as part of his narrative theme and strategy. He considers myths and stories not as local legends, folklore or primitive rituals, but as possible ways of looking at the present multidimensional realities and changing histories. He has found myth and mythical thought a fertile land in which he can model his fictional universe and offer alternative possibilities to the social and political ones. In other words, he de-mythecizes myths and reworks histories.

From what has been cited above, it can be said that myths are meaning seeking narratives that grow in narrative power repetition, evolution and adaptation. Further, they bring the past and present into dialogue. In addition to this, individual myths are best understood as a node at the centre of a complex network of inter-related stories and intertextual narratives. Finally, myths are social stories, which emerge out of commonly understood cultural frameworks, they narrate themes of fundamental importance to cultural groups and they can serve to confirm or challenge broadly held cultural beliefs.

It is believed that literature is nothing but a kind of reconciliation between reality and imagination, and that the novelist’s task is to transform his perception of
society into artistic perception. The fact that myth is a private world of imagination is of close connection to Rushdie who exploits myths for the same purpose. This observation supports the novel’s structure of him in which the concept of imagination in the text always holds a meaning of inspiration for his characters to draw new social worlds. Thus, in the fictional world of him, myths appear as powerful elements in giving commentary on reality. His fiction has been loaded with myths that suggest a direct purpose for an improved society. And in many cases his fiction does not come to establish order and harmony, but to express a protest against totality on the one hand, and a desire for change on the other.

Myth is a prominent term in literary analysis. A large group of myth critics, including Robert Graves, Francis Fergusson, Maud Bodkin, Richard Chase, and most influentially Northrop Frye—view literature as recurrences of the basic mythic formulas. As Frye puts it, “the typical forms of myth become the conventions and genres of literature” (Abrams 170). Myth criticism as a kind of literary interpretation that regards literary works as expressions or embodiments of recurrent mythic patterns and structures, or of “timeless” archetypes. Myth criticism, which flourished in the 1950s and 1960s, is less interested in the specific qualities of a given work than in those features of its narrative structure or symbolism that seem to connect it to ancient myths and religions.

Archetypal literary criticism is a type of critical theory that interprets a text by focusing on recurring myths and archetypes in the narrative, symbols, images, and character types in a literary work. As a form of literary criticism, it dates back to 1934 when Maud Bodkin published Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (1934). Bodkin’s literary analysis of myth and archetype was “to bring psychological analysis and reflection to
bear upon the imaginative experience communicated by great poetry, and to examine those forms or patterns in which the universal forces of our nature there find objectification”. (qtd. in Boswell 553). *The Golden Bough* (1890–1915), written by James G. Frazer was the first influential text dealing with cultural mythologies. It was widely accepted as the seminal text on myth that spawned numerous studies on the same subject. Eventually, the momentum of Frazer’s work carried over into literary studies. While his work deals with mythology and archetypes in material terms, the work of Carl Jung is, in contrast, immaterial in its focus. Jung’s work theorizes about myths and archetypes in relation to the unconscious, an inaccessible part of the mind. Jung perceives myths as the “culturally elaborated representations of the contents of the deepest recess of the human psyche: the world of the archetypes” (Walker 4).

Actually, it was not until Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) that archetypal criticism was theorized in purely literary terms. His work breaks from both Frazer and Jung in such a way that it is distinct from its anthropological and psychoanalytical precursors. How archetypes came to be was also of no concern to Frye; rather, the function and effect of archetypes is his interest. For him, literary archetypes “play an essential role in refashioning the material universe into an alternative verbal universe that is humanly intelligible and viable, because it is adapted to essential human needs and concerns” (Abrams 13-14). But, myth criticism has also been criticized as a form of reductionism that neglects cultural and historical differences as well as the specific properties of literary work. Though archetypal literary criticism is no longer widely practiced, it still has a place in the tradition of literary studies.
Carl Jung tried to understand the psychology behind the world of myths. Jung asserted that all humans share certain innate unconsciousness of psychological factors, which he called “archetypes”. Jung believed that the similarities between myths from different cultures reveal the existence of these universal archetypes. Joseph Campbell, on the other hand, believed that there were two different orders of mythology: the universal pertaining to the metaphorical of spiritual potentiality in the human being”, and the local which has to do with specific societies.

Myth, then, is not just a taxonomy, but *ideology* in narrative form. In the postcolonial context, when myths are used as framing devices to narrate historical events, our reading experience of these moments will be propelled by a particular force which is determined by the myth, not the event. Analyzing the rhetoric of persuasion or the affective power of myth, leads us to the ideological core of a narrative.

A critical frame for reading archetype in myth is essential to this research because it unmasks the ideological imperatives of a fictional work. Of the many approaches, Jung’s theory of archetype and archetypal image remains one of the most helpful theoretical explorations of the relation between archetypal narratives and the figurative expression of individual and collective impulses. His theories are aptly relevant to this study because he is cited as an influence (and sometimes a source of parody) by all the authors in the field. His theories on archetype and archetypal image are most helpful in reading the fiction of Rushdie, especially the relationship between the archetypes of the past and their parodical reflections of the present. However, Jung goes on to suggest that myths are made up of strings of archetypal images -- recognizable groups of archetypal images that are ordered in relatively similar patterns of relation. These larger patterns may be collective, but negotiation of a myth
always involves a subjective component which depends on the “affect” of the myth on individual life history and story. Jung described myth as a “textbook of archetypes” in which archetypal images function as resonant points of entry into narratives that are already embedded in the psyche. He maintained that the recognition of archetypal impulse through archetypal image fostered the necessary link between a subjective and objective imagination. However, he also stressed the necessity for negotiation and differentiation of individual psychic content from the universalizing images of archetype.

As vehicles of collective communal narratives, myths represent the culturally formed narratives on archetypal processes. As such, they are always already ideologically coded and they invoke the power of archetype in service of collective socio-cultural practice and belief systems. As Stephen Walker points out in his study on the function of myth in analytical psychology, the act of reading myth within a Jungian frame is primarily subjective:

The subjective factor is important in two different ways. First of all, a myth must have a numinous and emotional impact on the individual’s psyche in order to be experienced and understood as a genuine myth: the individual is moved by the myth. Second, even in the course of analyzing a myth as the object of a purely academic investigation along Jungian lines, the researcher must respond emotionally to the myth. (95)

However, Jung’s theories of myth place the onus of interpretation squarely on a process of affective re-experiencing of mythical narrative. In the field of literary myth criticism, this is all the more important since the cultural content of a myth can be different for author, reader, and for the indigenous communities from which certain myths are appropriated. Jung’s own analytical tools of “differentiation” and “integration” serve as helpful functions when applied to literary myth criticism,
because they foreground the need for constant, subtle re-evaluations of the power relations between mythical subject and object. Unlike Freud’s work on myth, Jung provides us with a discursive frame in which to theorize the function of both sacred and secular myth as having meaning not merely as symptom. Furthermore, as a key influence on the work of Frye, Jung’s theories provide a key counterpoint to Frye’s reading of archetype.

While Frye draws primarily on Jung’s “Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious” (1928) as a source for *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), he diverges significantly from Jung’s position. Taking Jung’s notion of a collective unconscious, Frye reads archetypal content in a text centripetally. On the other hand, Frye does not seem critically concerned with Jung’s own theoretical approach to reading archetype in the analytical situation. Also, he does not foreground a schematic approach to literature based on “form”. As a result, he overlooks key features of Jung’s analytical process that ensure the differentiated reading of individual content in an archetypal image. While Jung stresses the eventual return of all myths to a point within the psyche, his way of reading myth allows for a middle ground in which myth is neither reduced to any sign with ideological potency nor inflated into a purely collective narrative.

The disciplines of literature and modern literary criticism are having a marked impact on the discipline of history. The main goals of this section will be to examine the recent perspectives of the overwhelming interplay of historical discourse and fictional literature and then to map out the different proposals illuminating that semblance and intersection. What is history then if not, to use Samuel Eliot Morison’s words, “to relate the past creatively to the present.” That is why history is not only
written but rewritten. It is what Emerson meant when he wrote enigmatically, “History is vanishing allegory”. (Nye 66)

Humans made history and that writing of history involves reconstructing the thoughts of people in history. As the historian “knows what happened, he already knows why it happened” (Collingwood 214). The historian transforms his data by the very act of observation and comprehension, and any clear distinction between the object of knowledge and the knowing subject becomes impossible. It is said that in history, nothing is true but names and dates; in fiction, everything is true but names and dates.

The concept of history has been an issue of discussion by many scholars and philosophers since Aristotle. The debate among historians, literary, critical and cultural critics revolves around whether history is a purely scientific social discipline which adheres to objective truth based on empirical scientific facts or is a discipline which records human actions in the form of narration. In other words, does history give us empirical facts or human values? If so, how objective is the historian’s narration? The significance of history analysis lies not so much in its factual knowledge as in its representational value of human deeds.

For Edward Carr, history is a science in the sense that it provides knowledge and it is a natural science because it tries to explain historical facts (86). Carr’s conception of history is not ultimately definitional as much as it is explanatory. History, in essence, is not like physics, which formulates natural laws with which we can predict certain specific phenomena. Instead, it looks for explanations to historical facts and not necessarily provides natural empirical truths. History is subjected to human subjectivity and human limitations. This implies that it is impossible to posit
“historical laws” which are capable of predicting what will happen specifically. Carr sees a dialogical relationship between history and natural science on the one hand, and between the objective and subjective within history itself. Ibn Khaldun described history as:

the record of human society, or world civilization; of the changes that take place in the nature of that society . . . of revolutions and uprisings by one set of people against another, with the resulting kingdoms and states with their various ranks; of the different activities and occupations of men, … and in general, of all the transformations that society undergoes by its very nature.”(qtd. in Hobsbawm 8)

History systematically records what people have thought, said, and done. It describes humanity’s efforts to improve the world and recounts achievements and setbacks in the long, uphill climb toward a high level of civilization.

Hobbes sees history as the name of knowledge of facts where facts are the realm of history (Schumann 5). This traditional meaning of history suggests that history is a true record of facts. On the other hand, history is analyzed as “a synthesis of imagination and presentation of ideas” (6). The function of history is, then, to search for facts and concrete objects as well as ideas of imagination. In this, human actions are the scope of history which offers the historical facts. This view is based on the idea that historical narrative and fictive narrative share the common characteristic of textuality. This synthetic view of history is an advancing step in the development of literary critical analysis of history as a blend of fact and fiction. This approach may be described as a passage from fact to fiction, and from experience to imagination for both are products of common forms of narrative. The duality of fact and fiction, experience and imagination, and reason and emotion is a celebrated thought of “fact-fiction” reconciliation.
Arthur Marwick believes that history is the knowledge of the human past, and that to ‘narrate’ means to tell a story (1). Thus, the ultimate purpose of history is to “tell” the knowledge of the past human action, or rather to narrate (re-tell) the “story” of human life—the glories, events, ideas and traditions which passed from generation to generation. However, the term “history” has been subjected to several interpretations and revealed different conceptual collocations. Of all the fields of serious study and literary effort, history may be the hardest to define precisely, because the attempt to uncover past events and formulate an intelligible account of them necessarily involves the use and influence of many auxiliary disciplines and literary forms.

History is conceived of as a dynamic process of interlinked events. What happened in the past profoundly affects all aspects of our lives in the present and, will, indeed, affect what happens in the future. Events happened in the past are the fundamental sources of tension and conflict today. History is what actually happened in the past, “the human past.” It is the process of enquiry of the past. It is an interpretation of “the body of knowledge about the past.” It is the significant aspects of the past, or those interpretations of historians, or the body of historical knowledge that could be held to have a “real” existence. Eric Forner seeks in his book, Who Owns History (2002), to deal with the relationship of the historian to the world in which he lives, and he acknowledges that the context within which a historian lives and writes affects [his] choice of subject and approach to the past.

History is also an interpretation of the past. “The facts of history do not exist for any historian till he creates them” (Carr 21). History is a process which provides meaning, not only about the past, but about the way we analyze the past for a purpose to explore the social and political meanings (Marwick 3). History is no better than
self-serving myth. That history contains an implement of myth, or a mythical quality. Nations, in general, desire to explore the mythical versions of history which intersect with the accurate and professional true version of history (18). A piece of historical writing is no more than a well-today story (20). History is facts colored by the personality and mind of the historian (Ali 8). It deals with events, not states; it investigates things that happen and not things that are. The difference between the historian and the archaeologist is that the former is concerned with what happened whereas the latter is concerned with how it happened. For Rousseau, history is “the art of choosing from among many lies that one which most resembles the truth” (qtd. in Ali 4). History, in its broadest sense, is the totality of all past events. It treats facts as particular, not unique events. It does not have a reference to the universal. The historical event is composed of analyzable and repeatable ingredients (Elton 88). “The historian must look beyond government to people, beyond laws to legends, beyond religion to folklore and the arts, whether intellectual, political, social, philosophical, material, moral or emotional relating to man in society.” (Ali 17)

History has mainly two functions to perform: one is the collection of data, and the other is the interpretation of the data. The first part is described as objective and therefore scientific, the second one is subjective and sense humanistic. The purpose of history, as a serious endeavor is to understand human life. Until modern times, history was looked upon primarily as a mere record of events and a source of knowledge of human past. With the advance of critical theories such as poststructuralism, postmodernism, and new historicism, history comes to be dealt with as a special kind of literature that shared many techniques and effects with fictional narrative. Historians were committed to factual material and personal truthfulness, but like writers of fiction they wrote detailed narratives of events and vivid character sketches
with great attention to language and style. The complex relation between literary art and historiography has been and continue to be a subject of serious debate.

The basic idea in dealing with the concept of history requires a probe into what produces historical facts in the sense that understanding historical fact, rather than the knowledge of it, is what actually matters to an audience. This consequently entails that historical truths and facts are themselves questionable because the representation of an event or action is not like presenting or doing it. There is indeed a difference between performing an action and acting it out. The representation of an event, therefore, does not include the association or circumstantial reality of that event. The contributing factors and other associative elements are dropped or left untold. Moreover, any historical account cannot be spared from the historian’s subjective commentary or imaginative interventions. In this way, history becomes the historian’s narrative text. Its truth and factuality have been thwarted out within the fictive representation of the fact.

“Is history a science or art?” has been the focal debate among historians, philosophers and the literary critics since long. The main argument revolves around the representation of the historical truths. Since human past can only be represented or reproduced and not viewed, any representation is virtually partial and its truth is not complete. Hence, the difference between science and art is that while the former gives general ideas and is driven by the subjective observation which provides empirical facts and based on objective method, the latter gives general ideas and is driven by the subjective observation. In other words, whereas science produces a particular truth, art introduces a universal one. Another aspect concerning the concept of history which causes a great deal of controversy among cultural and literary critics is who writes
history. It is generally said that history is usually written by the victorious. In this case, the history we have is a totalitarian, official, and biased account of the past. Its truths and facts are determined. It is ideologically motivated and politically deviated. In contrast to this, the new thought of history seeks to cover the other voices that are not represented and to view history, not a final version of single truth but an account of many possible interpretations.

The philosophy of history as the interpretation of the whole of history asks two fundamental questions: is it possible to grasp the totality of history at each moment by overcoming the duality of acts and works, the mutability of one and the other? What is the texture of this total history, kind of intelligibility to which it might aspire?

A philosophy of history assumes in fact the human history is not a simple sum of juxtaposed facts… a totality in movement toward a privileged state that gives meaning to the whole. History has meaning only if there is a logic of human coexistence that precludes no adventure but that at least, as if by natural selection, finally eliminates those that act as a division in relation to the permanent needs of humanity. (Draus 49)

The analysis of of history as a succession of actions has shown us that one cannot set up barriers between the various areas of social reality or between the various activities of men. A true understanding of the past confirms the duty of tolerance to avoid fanaticism. History is quite obviously meaningful and it should have a meaning out of the human activities which cannot be reduced to totality or singularity. One understands an event by placing it in a context, and by inspiring the role of the participant in reality.
The term “history” denotes the objective knowledge and connotes the fictive narration of what has happened. It also necessitated a narrative mode for its representation. In fact, narrative is the mode of discourse, i.e., a manner of speaking common to both “historical” and “non-historical” cultures and that it predominates in both mythic and fictional discourse. The new concept of history assumes that there is no transhistorical or universal human essence and that human subjectivity is constructed by cultural codes which position and limit all of us in various and divided ways. This conceptualization entails that there is no objectivity. We experience the “world” in language, and all our representations of the world, our readings of texts and of the past, are informed by our own historical position, by the values and politics that are rooted in them. These representations “make things happen” by “shaping human consciousness”. Therefore, as forces acting in history, various forms of representation ought to be read in relation to non-discursive “texts” like “events”. Therefore, no one can claim an objective reading of events.

If history is the old stories which happened in the past, then our purpose of analyzing and interpreting history is to re-build our societies. Historical events are read and re-read in the light of the present. The significance of history then is to give values and truths for the present and current issues of society. History unfolds itself as a representation of human actions, values, and ideas. “Historians and philosophers of history will then be freed to conceptualize history, to perceive its contents, and to construct narrative accounts of its processes in whatever modality of unconsciousness is most consistent with their own moral and aesthetic aspirations” (White, *Metahistory* 434). History is a matter of process and interaction which results in producing meanings and values. According to Collingwood, the philosophy of history is concerned neither with “the past by itself” nor with “the historian’s thought about it
by itself’, but with “the two things in their mutual relations”. This dictum reflects the two current meanings of the word ‘history’—the inquiry conducted by the historian and the series of the past events. (qtd. in Carr 21)

The past, which a historian studies, is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present. But a past act is dead, i.e., meaningless to the historian, unless he can understand the thought that lay behind it. The reconstruction of the past in the historian’s mind is dependent on the empirical evidence. However, it is not in itself an empirical process, and cannot consist in a mere recitation of facts. History can never express objectivity. In the view of Keith Jenkins, history is never innocent, but always ideological. Ideology is a form of power. It is the central element of history and the force that is responsible for writing an official history (xiii). On the other hand, Jasbir Jain refers to history as “the idea of an objective reality” which “has been subverted by the surfacing of multiple perspectives and ideological discourses” (13).

History is bound by time and place. Its truth is particular and its character is specific. Fiction, on the other hand, is an open-ended universe. Its truth is universal and its character is general. If history deals with the probable, fiction deals with the possible. History gives us concrete facts; philosophy provides us with abstract percepts; fiction teaches us the abstract ideas through a living and concrete examples. Fiction reflects the concrete world and re-describes it. Also, it deals with concept of change and with the possibility of new ways of life. Narrative is not necessarily interested in cause and effect; it is also not interested in merely recording events. It is interested in employment, in depths and private motivations. History is a narrative form which does move outside mere mimesis and mere representation to become an act which produces meaning. Stephen Greenblatt’s shifts from new historicism to
cultural projects also attempts to signify an engagement not merely with facts and chronicles, but with the meaning which they embody. It is not just historical knowledge but also mythical and fictional representation of what is thought to be real and factual. It “guides us by vanities” because it shows man what he wants to see, not what is right (Gross 300). This is then a prominent feature of dynamism which can be achieved only through fiction and fantasy. People have to write themselves their own history to suit their possibilities of life. History does not have a moral validity. We cannot trust the moral values coming from it because these values are made by certain forces to especially meet their ends. Another reason is that there is no something right in these values. Harvey Gross intends to say that the meaning of history should reflect and express all forces existing in society and not only those who write history. To put it in a different way, we can suspect any values that are imposed by certain political or ideological forces. “The past we study is only a construct of our minds” (Hobsbawm 7). Indeed, history is a chosen sample of verifiable data that we assemble and interpret according to what we think is rather than what it is. The concept of history and its nature have been defined by John Vincent who has elaborately stated:

    History is deeply male … History is about the rich and famous, not the poor. History favours the articulate, not the silent. History is about winners … History is about assessing distortions, not copying out truths. … History has much to say about the way the powerful handle power, for power engenders records … (25)

    Like literature, philosophy, and the arts, history is a way of looking at human experience --at the lives of the individuals who are its parts and at the life of the society which is the sum. Raymond Aron, a twentieth-century scholar, based his thought on the idea that the individual is the main force that stands behind the events.
He believes that “human act becomes an event when it is seen as the product of a choice among several possibilities, as a response to a given situation” (qtd.in Draus 38). Aron’s concept of history suggests freedom and diversity against totality and homogeneity. The individual is recognized as a real maker of history and the most important force in society. His theory was a foreground for the postmodern novel which celebrates the role and position of the individual as a maker of his fate and history. It also foregrounds the rejection of determined and blindly received concepts of Marxism and other ideologies of determination. This theory foregrounds the individual’s history as a counterpart to the public history.

The “modern” view looks at history as a dynamic process pertaining to social change. In other words, history is viewed as a product of logos and mythos, mediated by mythical representation. The modern view comes to privilege the ‘oneself’ or the individual as a pivotal element. It gives this “fragmented subject” its weight as a “positive maker” of history against what is imagined as unified, complete and consistent with itself. This approach to history implies that there is no final version of truth. Hence, two ways can be identified in approaching history: history as text and history as a discourse. History can be treated as text and textually analyzed since the basis of historical knowledge is written texts and not empirical facts. History as text has certain features: narrative form, representational, and withstanding. It includes the use of imagination in analyzing history. On the other hand, history as discourse is non-narrative and non-representational. By discourse is meant the social and political messages and ideas that a writer wants to convey to the audience. Concepts such memory, myth, fiction and history becomes forms of meaning when contextualized in the social and political situation.
Generally, the various views of history lie within one of the two major approaches: historicist approach and the new historicist approach. Historicists and new historicists are quite different in dealing with history. They represent two different theories and ways of thinking about history. For instance, a traditional historian (historicist) asks, “what happened?”, and what does the event tell about history. In contrast, a new historian (new historicist) asks, “how has the event been interpreted?” and “what do the interpretations tell us about the interpreters?” (Tyson 279) For most traditional historians, history is a series of events that have a linear, caused relationship. New historicists, in contrast, try to analyze “the complicated web of competing ideologies and conflicting social, political and cultural agendas of the time about place in which an incident occurred”. (279)

The individual identity in the view of the new historical approach is a product of social culture; shapes and is shaped by his social environment and culture. The individual and society, according to the new historical approach, interact in all levels and directions in the sense that a certain group or social level cannot monopolize the power in society. Thus, power circulates in all directions to from all social levels at all times. “No discourse, by itself can adequately explain the complex cultural dynamic of social power” (281). History in this sense cannot be subjected to one single view of interpretation. The new historical approach rejects any totalizing or single explanation of history.

The new historicists insist that history should be understood in the light of web of discourses which form its meaning. The meaning of history is a product of network of discourses at a particular time and many other factors in the time of a historical event. The main concern of new historical approach is to study history as text. In this, a literary text is analyzed from all aspects so that it gives a mature meaning and a
profound understanding. This approach deconstructs the traditional opposition between the factual and the fictional thought.

However, the new methods to history focus on the meanings and values that history produces rather than knowledge of events it narrates. The focus is on the intellect not on power, and on the meaning not the content. The new historical method deals with history as a process which produces meanings whereas the traditional one deals with history as a given science of knowledge. The traditional historical method serves to offer an authoritative history whereas the new method gives an intellectual version of plural views. It reflects the view of authority and power. On the other hand, the new historical method is based on the idea that “literature makes history”, and that the “literary text is part and parcel of a much wider cultural, political and economic dispensation” (Bertens 176). History as a fiction is related to a realist socio-political context. For this, the prominent new historicist critic Stephen Greenblatt, in his view of history as text, has connected the work of art to the institutions and practices of society (qtd. in Bertens 76). This idea can be looked as a continuation to the modern towering figures of literature, namely T.S. Eliot, who has long before felt the dynamism of history when he viewed it as a field not of knowledge but of dynamic cultural meaning. He perceives that:

The historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a
writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity. (Enright 294)

Thus, history has two shapes: knowledge and dynamism. By dynamic history is meant the record of man’s struggle within the cultural forces and its results (victory or defeat). This kind of history gives a meaning of power as a cultural force which affects and determines the individual’s acts and conducts. If historical knowledge is fixed and stable, the dimension of dynamism is unstable and has the shape of process. Also, we realize that the arena of history is society, values, morality and cultural meaning. History can be enacted in the social arena. The major meaning of it is not to record the certainties of what happens, but rather to explore the dynamic meanings and values and examine how they may affect our present situation.

Until 1970s, historicism was a dominant “critical movement insisting on the prime importance of historical context to the interpretation of texts of all kinds” (Hamilton 1). It is a theory of history holding that the course of events is determined by unchangeable laws or cyclic patterns. It entails that the only true understanding of a person, society, historical period, etc., comes about through knowledge of its history. Further, historicism is a mode of thinking in which the basic significance of specific social context—e.g., time, place, local conditions—is central; whereas the notion of fundamental generalizable immutable laws in the realm of sociology or social behavior tends to be rejected. From this, we understand that “history” is the study of past events and social, political and economic development. The big difference between historicism and historiography is that historiography signifies the traditional form and method of history whose primary concern is facts and historical knowledge. Historicism, however, concerns with the possibilities and probabilities of
the historical events. There was a need to study the development of society and its culture in a way that gives specific answers to how and why the events happened.

New historicism appears as a reaction against the earlier historicism. The earlier historicists reduced history to a single, massive monolith that left no room for neglected voices that new historicists wanted to listen to and converse with. Further, “earlier historicists did not take into account their own historicity and the subsequent significance on their research of the interference between the past which they tried to investigate and the present from which they were doing so”. (Pieters 22)

New historicism is, briefly, based on the following principles: historical reality is not sufficient in itself, but has to adopt the form of text. The cultural phenomena are dealt as texts which need to be read and analyzed. Furthermore, new historicism rejects the view that the work of art is independent from any historical or social background. This approach is a combination of literary and non-literary texts constituents of historical discourse that are both inside and outside of texts. New historicism is also to be read as a reaction to the formalism of structuralism and poststructuralism and as a response to the perception that American educational institutions and culture are rapidly forgetting history. Moreover, the approach adapted to a certain extent the ideal of cultural materialism which insists that the “textuality” of history, a culture and its literary products are always conditioned by the real material forces and relations of production in their historical era. The scholars of this school are particularly interested in the political significance, and especially the subversive aspects and effects, of a literary text, not only in its own time, but also in later versions that have been revised.
Louis Montrose described the new historicism as “a reciprocal concern with the historicity of texts and the textuality of history.” That is, history is conceived not to be a set of fixed, objective facts, but like the literature with which it interacts, a text which itself needs to be interpreted. Any text, on the other hand, is conceived as a discourse which, although it may seem to present, or reflect, an external reality, in fact consists of what are called representations – that is, verbal formations which are “ideological products” or “cultural constructs” of the historical conditions specific to an era (Abrams 182-184). This approach obliterated the boundaries between text and context and between history and fiction. That is to say, history, in the postmodern era, has been regarded as a discourse constructed by a “literary imagination” and “power relations,” and in this sense it is ideological and subjective, always open to multiple inquiries and re-interpretations. New historicists acknowledge that the historians or authors are governed by “subjectivity”. They have been shaped and informed by the circumstances and discourses specific to their era. Hence, their own critical writings in great part construct, rather than discover ready-made, the textual meanings they describe and the literary and cultural histories they narrate.

The construction of history attributed to new historicism is best told as a story of power relations and struggle, a story that is contradictory, heterogeneous, fragmented. History is a tale of many voices and forms of power, of power exercised by the weak and the marginal as well as by the dominant and the strong (Newton 152). Literary production asserted that history cannot be divorced from textuality. New historicists thus intended to tear down the wall between history and literature. “The contribution of the new historicism has been to identify a third alternative in which the very antagonism between literature and ideology becomes, in specific historical environments, a powerful and socially functional mode of constructing
subjectivity” (Gallagher 44). New historicism is, in part, a school of literary criticism which argues strongly in favour of putting literature back into social and historical context (Schmitz 159), and in part, a cultural theory based on the cultural analysis of history. This theory appeared in the early 1980s at the hand of Michel Foucault and some other scholars and developed by Stephen Greenblatt in 1982.

The new historical approach is based on the premise that a literary work should be considered a product of time, place, and circumstances of its composition rather than as an isolated creation. This critical approach aims simultaneously to understand the work through its historical context and to understand cultural intellectual history through literature which documents the new disciplines of the history of ideas. The most effective theorizing point of this critical approach is a reconstruction of the past, including perhaps, the present of the past. The task of historian/author is to “decipher” and “decode” the meaning of the historical events and to analyze the whole elements that stand behind the text: ideology, science, politics, and culture. A literary text is said by new historicists to be “embedded” in its context, and in a constant interaction and interchange with other components inside the network of institutions, beliefs, and cultural power-relations, practices, and products that, in their ensemble, constitute what we call history. This means simply that new historicism focuses on relations of power, including the power of culture, in a certain historical period in order to give a profound truth. This approach, in short, is based on a general assumption that social relations are intrinsically relations of power. In the view of H. Aram Veeser, new historicism is a method of analyzing the literary text in the light of the complex relations between the forces of society with a special focus on culture (xi).
History as a broad term can be classified into many types: natural history, scared history, human history, political history, social history, religious history, intellectual history, literary history and woman’s history, etc. However, the scope of our concern here is the history of man and his socio-political and cultural environment. This history includes the reported facts of man’s activities and the motives which stand behind them. It has a characteristic of secularism and profanity. It is also governed by subjectivity. History always leaves open to possibility of plurality of conflicting or confirming reports and especially interpretations (Schumann 3-16). Above all, there are two main versions of history classified according to its presentation of human action: history as fact and history as text. They are more or less based on two critical theories, historicism and new historicism. The division of history, however, can also be classified according to its contents. Therefore, history can be categorized into political, economic, intellectual, cultural, religious, social, female, etc.

The traditional notion of history includes four major elements: facts, knowledge, truthfulness and fiction. The concept of “fiction” is of significance in the field of narration and narrative fiction. In this respect, history has the features of “story” and a fictive report. This is an advancing meaning of history in the seventeenth century developed by Hobbs. There are two ways in dealing with history – one is the historical narrative; this means histories and true knowledge. The second manner is fabulous (fictive) narrative “distortion and susceptible for truth”. In this view, history becomes part of story that contains the spirit of amusement. This is in fact an addition of aesthetic elements which gives the factual knowledge some kind of fantasy and entertainment. He finds no difference between the two expressions of “to narrate a history” or to “narrate story”.
From this, it is obvious that there is a close relationship between history and fiction, simply because the common feature between them is “narrating”. A historian and novelist share the same characteristic of “storytelling”. A historian can be a storyteller, and consequently, history can be a form of story. The novelist simultaneously is free to present his fictive version of history. “Fiction as history at its best is turning events into history just as it is turning the historical material into art” (Singh 146). Sir Philip Sidney views the relationship between the poet and historian as one pertaining to the subjective and the universal, and the other to the objective and the particular. He argues that:

if this imagining of matters be so fit for the imagination, then must the historian needs surpass, who brings you images of true matters, such as indeed were done, and not such as fantastically or falsely may be suggested to have been done … the best of the historian is subject to the poet; for whatsoever action, whatsoever counsel, policy, or war-stratagem the historian is bound to recite, that may the poet, if he list, with his imitation make his own, beautifying it both for further teaching and more delighting, as it pleased him.(Enright 17-18)

Raymond A. Mazurek reaffirms that history is a form of novel. He was of the view that history acts as text and discourse. Since fictional history is not restricted to time or place, Mazurek expounds, “history is a timeless story of society” (29). This is then a “textual history” which means, not historical events of certain dates, names and places. Instead, the novelist introduces history as a story of imagination that goes beyond the confines of dates and restricted events. History has a large space of time and place and is a timeless cycle of incidents. In this, history may become a story of the past and present and a story of all times, this is because history becomes a fictional narrative. The major purpose of this is to direct the reader’s mind to the
plausible way of realities. Second, it is a form that responds to the official and traditional representation that ignores the literary and human dimension in treatment. The most important idea here is that history in fiction may have the content and meaning of what is termed by Hayden White as “Metahistory”, which indicates that history can be represented as a fictional discourse by the use of linguistic tools. Language is the mediator that represents the historical reality. The historian and the novelist both try to represent reality using a literary language. In this sense, history is apprehended as a sort of fictional narrative and dramatic urgency and immediacy of a series of fictional present moments dealing with events as timeless story.

Another major topic concerning the issue of history is the relationship between history and memory, especially in the “traumatic history”. Memory work has been utilized as a tool of resistance against oblivion. Post war novels tend to focus on new themes, especially the themes of loss, crises of identity and gender problems. The metahistorical romance tends to focus on politicized issues of identity – specifically race, class, gender and identity as well as the problem of subjectivity itself – in relation to cultural and historical context. (Elias 51)

Postmodern literary criticism has become so powerful and influential across such a broad range of disciplines, and it has raised so many disturbing questions about the conceptual foundations of history itself, that historians can no longer ignore it. The postmodern reading rejects the singularity and determinism of the traditional approach to history which deals with history as linear shape. The view of history as fixed dates and empirical facts has been replaced by the multiple view which acknowledges the dissent voices and gives way to the different realities to be represented. Postmodernism, in brief, looks at history as a cyclical shape of open-ended possibilities. So, it seems unquestionable that new historicism is part of the
postmodern trend in literary history. It welcomes the breakdown of genres and invites the analysis of discontinuities, linking anecdotes to the disruption of understanding of history. The meaning of history in the postmodern novel shifts from the absolutism to relativism and from history as narrative to history as fiction. Meanwhile, understanding of history as a form of fiction leads to an appreciation of history as indeterminate, multi-faceted actualities. History and fiction, in this sense, both can present the truth of experience, but as narrative, they serve different cultural functions and expectations.

Narrative myths and its postmodern use carry out the potential of what Linda Hutcheon calls “discursive contexts... and particularities ... of all macropolitical groupings” (A Poetics of Postmodernism 92). The use of myth in contemporary native fiction, therefore, highlights the socio-political dimension of the dynamic dialogues between the text and its reader, inviting the latter to inspect the boundaries between the multiple contexts of his/her own identity. For instance, the mythological archives for native Indian writers become both an aesthetic and political tool that enables them to reveal the uncomfortable interactions of class, religion and other terms that construct social collections in the process of literary text reception. For Rushdie, in particular, native myth serves as a powerful critique of colonial ideology, which has attempted to erase aboriginal cultures in the process of colonialism as imperialist creation of myth. While problematizing the social receptions of native cultural discourse prevalent in, Rushdie’s novels disrupt the Western and patriarchal discourse. Obviously, parodying strategies have been an effective postmodern device in his rewriting of history. The track of history in the postmodern perspective is:
not only to restore history and memory in the face of the distortions of the "history of forgetting" but also, at the same time, to put into question the authority of any act of writing by locating the discourse of both history and fiction within an ever-expanding intertextual net work that mocks any notion of either single origin or simple causality. (Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* 129)

Fictional histories do not focus on absolute facts. They rather blur the boundaries between fact and fiction. The representation of history in the form of narrative meant to blur the distinction between the two domains cited. This kind of history develops a sense of the cyclic nature of time in the text in which the past constantly circles into the present and the future in contrast to the linear model of it. Further, there are no boundaries between the authentic and the mythical experience, and the destination between fact and fiction becomes less clear. Of course, the fictional history suggests timelessness. To be postmodern means to escape time. The three elements related to postmodernity -- culture, nationalism and history—are fictionally historicized.

One of the postmodernist-mind views is to search for new meanings of history rather than the theories and methods that look at history as a sacred thing of a final truth. One of these meanings is that history should be realized as process. By this is meant that history is a product of constant interaction with social and political forces. The postmodern writer deals with history as a process of desire and social change, rather than merely a source of solid knowledge. Amy J. Elias claims that postmodernism is basically anti-foundationalist historiography (i.e., the traditional historical novel which centers on facts only) in the sense that the postmodernist thought does not celebrate the historical facts (xviii). In the view of Elias, "postmodernism is debated as a social phenomenon, as an aesthetic, as epistemology,
and as a political philosophy, but the central tenet in all debates is that postmodernism attempts to project a new Western relation to history” (4). The postmodern perspective suggests that history should be treated in the realm of philosophy, literary criticism, and artistic production. The central idea here is that the postmodernist school deals with history from a new perspective, which essentially subverts the foundations and determined concepts. That is, a subversion of stable truths and a repudiation of modernist autonomy. In short, it deals with history from a view of literature. The treatment of history from a postmodern perspective, as has been discussed above, echoes the features and foundations of new historicism, and postcolonial studies which “are much indebted to the debates over postmodernism, capitalism, and history.

There are so many tools that have a function in the postcolonial novel and in the subject of history. One major tool, as already mentioned earlier, is “memory”, a tool of narration. It is deliberately used to avoid accuracy and authenticity. “Historical fiction reflects necessarily two distinct pasts -- the historical past takes as its subject matter and the historical past of its creation -- as well as beliefs and attitudes held in the present in which it is read” (Schwebel 213). Its primary function is not just to recreate a new reality but also to destabilize and deconstruct the concepts and meanings of traditional fixities. It is connected with acts of re-creation, reproduction and re-imagination of new maps and cultural meanings.

Consistent with the postcolonial critique of colonial culture is the attempt of reformulating more plausible concepts for understanding what actually took place under colonialism, redeeming past events from colonial ideologies of improvement and liberation, and evolving new categories for mapping a resistant world from the colonized point of view. The late-twentieth-century postcolonial as well as
postmodern fiction may share a metahistorical imagination, an imagination that returns to history and questions the grounds on which it has been epistemologically and politically established. Both kinds of fiction react to the forces of modernization. Both are a reaction-formation to the trauma of history itself. Both kinds of fiction (the post colonial and the post modern fiction) question the relationship between narrative and historical documentation, particularly as that relation has been defined in the political and aesthetic context of the secular humanist First World. Both forms of fiction raise thorny and politically volatile questions about authorial imagination and intentionality and about the politics of historical critique. In short, the postcolonial fiction is an expression of a metahistorical form that gives an allegorical truth about the real world.

Basically, we know that the work of history is that which includes historical places, events, customs, and attitudes. On the other hand, the work of a novelist is to deal with the realm of human possibilities, and that his work is about the human heart in general. He transcends the limits and confines of place and time because he precisely deals with imagination. Yet, some writers create works that include historical places, events, customs, and attitudes—the features of the area of history. Perhaps the main difference between the historical novel and the historical narrative is that the latter tries to give all the truth, while the former gives what it considers to be the basic or the central truth about an event, a person, or a period in history. But the novelist, while he makes you wait for the expected events to take place, he also gives a new narrative impetus to the chain of events that lead to the expected event.

However, the debate among reviewers is that how a novelist can represent history and historical events in the form of novel without disturbing the real events of what happens. According to one view, history is not a literary text. Therefore, they
reject the idea of “fictionalization” because if you deal with history as text, according to this team, you would change the actuality of events and consequently and you would represent untrue pictures of history. The second team sees that history can be treated as a text, and that the function of the historical novelist is a shift from the confines and limits of historical events to larger spaces of imagination in a way that it gives a complete analysis of the role and position of character in relation to the historical and cultural factors. The effective historical novel is not only that one which is concerned with might be termed as documentary knowledge or certain accurate records but rather is one which studies the relationship between the character and the social and cultural factors around him. A good historical novel is that which represents the unfamiliar and the uncertain.

Reading Rushdie, from the new historical perspective, reveals that history is not only a representation of events but rather a dynamic sociohistorical process that defines the cultural set up of the identity. History and myth are agents of transformation, of creation, of reconfiguration and of reconciliation in his hands. For him, it is not for history’s sake; it is for evaluation and workmanship. It, for him, is a set of elements of power relations intimated with the desire for change.

Dealing with history as a structure of the novel fits into the nature and reality of India itself. It is a model of experience at various levels: social, political, cultural, historical and metaphysical. So, fiction would be an adequate form to represent these complex factors and constitutes of Indian reality. The narrative of Rushdie’s novels sets up a mythological framework as a hermeneutic lens through which it interprets its historical contexts. His method in dealing with history repeatedly reminds us of the textual form through which history is mediated. In other words, for him, the historical narrative operates within the social situation to produce new social and political
meanings. His method and aim is the rewriting of historical events. It is a product of combination of two major things, the textual form and the social situation.

History in Rushdie’s novels consists of discourse (social and political events) and literary narrative (text). This is the basic technique of postcolonial historical novel. The new approach to history is “to recreate the past and make it contemporary” (Singh 146). One might think of such an attitude as a revolution in the concept of the historical novel. It involves the paradox of turning the fluid nature of fiction into clear outlines of history. Fiction as history is a form of writing which gives significance to the peripheral and events which are dismissed by historians. Daleski holds the idea that there is a “resemblance between the historian and the novelist”. He cited Conrad’s statement: “Fiction is history, human history, or it is nothing” and that “a historian may be an artist too, a novelist is a historian, the preserver, the keeper, the expounder of human experience…The historian’s picture of the past is in every detail an imaginary picture”. (61)

But Rushdie came to resolve the tension between the two approaches of analysis. He helps to combine the two of them together; the representation of history as fictional writing and the writing of history as actual events. This is the method that he follows. He, for instance, deals with India’s history as a form of narrative and as a form of actual text, too. On this basis, he combines between the use of myth and history in a manner that he gives history a mythical form. His treatment with India’s history as a form of narrative suggests a timeless story of society because it becomes a matter of imagination and it is analyzed as a literary text. His *Midnight’s Children*, for instance, is a textual form through which history is mediated and, concurrently, it evokes the social situation within the historical narrative itself. There are two different theories about how history is represented and under what meaning, hope or
rationality? For him, the two aspects together are considered in the text. This duality also functions in his novels hand by hand to resolve the contradictions of spirit and materiality. In other words, there are two featuring major meanings of history: spiritual and empirical. This is then the historical sublime accomplishment in its meaning. The question now is about the relationship between this meaning and the postmodern historical imagination. Rushdie’s method is based on exposing the problems of the individual and his sufferings under the “authentic history” which is very often collective and repressive. His approach of analysis deals, in brief, with the social and cultural realities in terms of ideas and visions and without any restrictions of dates, events and quantifiable time. Also, it highlights the role of the individual whose business is to search for alternative possibilities on the Earth.

Indeed, what Rushdie strives to convey is the articulation of the suppressed “other voices” and to challenge the traditional literary canon without necessarily constructing a new one. His novels relish to surprise the reader by showing unthought-of connections between apparently minor episodes or anecdotes and the large course of what traditional historians have constructed as “public history”. New historical approach proves useful here in reading the text against its co-text. It will also help in analyzing his fictional representation of history and how he uses it as a method and theme in restructuring the present vis-à-vis the past.

Reading Rushdie’s fiction in the light of archetypal and myth criticism also helps in expounding his mythical thought. Myth in his hands is not a mere event, figure, or object; rather, it is a narrative theme and strategy. It becomes an idea--social and political--with a highly loaded meaning. Putting together within the postmodern and postcolonial literary works, his novels have embedded myth and history as strategic counter-narrative devices that demolish the totality of discourse and preach
the multiplicity of polyphonic voices. Postmodern and postcolonial approaches will be adopted to explain his “many histories”, “possible realities” and “hybrid identities”.
Works Cited


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