

Deconstructing Biblical Myths: Women in Michele Roberts' *The Wild Girl*

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Abstract

Myths have been an undeniable source in both shaping and expressing the values, norms and behavioural patterns in societies. However, the archetypes in these myths have helped to oppress women in their personal and social lives, and have forced them to accept identities which actually are not theirs. This article examines myths as ideological tools of patriarchal systems and it argues that gender stereotypes were created even in the religious texts of the New Testament of the Bible. Thus, the continuance of such gender stereotypes has enhanced the perpetuation of patriarchal ideology. However, a number of women writers have attempted to revise and rewrite these myths. The present study analyzes Michele Roberts' third novel, *The Wild Girl* as a rewriting of the Biblical myth in the New Testament in order to identify the author's attempts to deconstruct the phallogocentric patterns of thought created by the patriarchal ideology. It also explores the textual strategies that are employed by the novelist in order to challenge and revise the patriarchal ideology in myths, to find alternative definitions of female identity and to knit gynocentric myths. The study examines the selected novel from a feminist perspective to lay bare the attempts of the writer to break away from the male-oriented myths so as to rewrite female experience via rewriting myths. By such rewritings, the writer not only voices the genuine female experience but also paves the way for the creation of new myths which would celebrate female identity and freedom.

Keywords: Myth, Women, Patriarchy, Gender Roles, Rewriting