
THE ROLE OF THE MYTH IN THE SYMBOLIC SPACE OF CULTURE

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Abstract

The article considers interrelations of myths and symbols in the space of culture. Peculiarities of the development of mythological consciousness as prerequisites for the emergence of symbolic languages of culture are revealed. Different functions of myths and their role in the establishment and development of civilizations are distinguished, among which the most significant is the influence of myths on the formation of the value reasons for the cultural development and their prognostic function in general civilization processes. The role of myths is reinterpreted in terms of a modern culturological vision of this phenomenon. The myth-making potential is analysed as a resource for modernization processes of modern societies. The results of the study of myths by various researchers of culture are analysed and generalized, which is notional for culturological science. The mythological and religious consciousness and their interrelations, significant for the preservation of the value-semantic space of culture, are compared. The role of myths in the preservation and development of spiritual culture in the modern socium is emphasized. The role of myths as cultural symbols that play an important role in the preservation and development of cultural heritage, as well as in the formation of the cultural potential of modern society is analysed. The traditional attitude to the myth in the history of mankind is revised as a manifestation of archaic consciousness and one of the main obstacles to civilization development. As an alternative, it is suggested to evaluate myths as ideal goals and images of social transformations with reference to the relevant social and project practices.

Keywords: culture, function, cognition, consciousness, sacredness

1. Introduction

Currently, various typologies of myths have been developed. Specialists studying myths distinguish the following types of myths: 1) theogonic (the birth of the gods), 2) cosmogonic (creation of the world), 3) cosmological (the structure of the world), 4) anthropological (the creation of man), 5) etiological (the origin of natural features and objects), 6) soteriological (salvation of a person) and 7) eschatological (the end of the world) [1, 2].

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Mythology in cultural processes and in the relevant state policy is especially popular in the moments of crisis, changes in value standards and paradigms [14]. By generating a 'semantic section of culture', the myth fulfils the following functions in relation to society: 1) social and integrative; 2) regulatory; 3) sacral; 4) communication means and mode; 5) collective memory; 6) significant-modelling; denoting the construction of a sign system and models of the surrounding natural and social world; 7) axiological; 8) teleological; 9) theological (belief in the past and future of the people); 10) cognitive; 11) compensatory.

Famous culturologist V.M. Rozin considers the myth as a complex combination of different realities. Through the analysis of the reality of myth, he states the following: "When talking about reality, we mean two different concepts - the world of events that the person experiences and lives (the reality of art, dreams, games, communication, etc.) and the world in which the person lives; on the one hand, this world does not depend on the person (the latter, so to say, is thrown into the world), and, on the other hand, - it is understood by the person" [3].

The influence of ancient mythology on the establishment and formation of the national and cultural mental structure of the Russian people has been extensively studied in the Afanasiev's fundamental work 'Poetic Views of the Slavs on Nature'.

The modern researcher L.N. Voevodina [2] notes the following features of the influence of ancient mythological thinking on the formation of the Russian mentality:

- the power and development of the artistic imagination in the ancient myth-making, which to a large extent determined the development of the artistic imagery of the Russian language and thinking;
- immersion into the world of personal experiences through mythopoetic ideas, which constituted such a stable characteristic of the Russian mentality as lyricism, a special sincerity in interpersonal relationships; and
- the projection of the psychism of the private world on the surrounding nature manifested in the formation of the ecological self-awareness of the Russian people as a careful attitude to all living things surrounding a person. The studies of the ancient Russian culture mention the custom of the ancient Slavs to kneel before ploughing and ask forgiveness from Mother Earth for that it breasts will be ripped up with a plough. We may also include here the pink and paragon of poetic lyrics in Russian prose and poetry that animate the nature.

2. Methodology

E. Cassirer made a significant contribution to the conceptualization of the connection between mythology and cultural symbolism. He thinks that the basic forms of spiritual culture came from the mythological consciousness. This applies even to such sphere of rational knowledge of the world as the science,

which is seemingly far from mythology. Here is what E. Cassirer writes about this: “The original starting point for the formation of any science, its direct inception, is not so much in the sphere of sensuality as in the sphere of mythological contemplation. What is commonly called sensory consciousness, a set of the ‘world of perception’ which is further subdivided into clearly distinct separate sectors of perception, into sensory ‘elements’ of colour, sound, etc.: this itself is already a product of abstraction, of theoretical comprehension of the ‘given’. Before self-consciousness will reach this abstraction, it lives in the creations of mythological consciousness - not so much in the world of ‘things’ and their ‘properties’ as in the mythic abilities and forces, demons and deities. If therefore, according to Hegel’s call, ‘science’ should provide the natural consciousness with a ladder leading to itself, it must lower this ladder one step further. The comprehension of the science ‘establishment’ in ideal and not in temporal sense is completed only when its origin and difficult path from the sphere of mythological immediacy are demonstrated, and the direction and law of this movement are indicated.” [4]

Further, E. Cassirer highlights the side of myths, which may be of particular interest to culturologists: the intensity of the experience of myths, which is more significant than the search for connections between mythological thinking and physical reality. In this connection, the answer to the question ‘Why does one myth or another become important, sustainable, broadcasted in time?’ is significant for the researcher of mythology. Depending on the relevant answers, it is possible to explain the features of psychology, national character, historical past of different peoples, ethnic groups, nations.

Using the Cassirer’s mythology, one can also explain the prevailing type of religiosity, beliefs, which were originally present in the mythological consciousness of ancient people. This formulation of the question allows us to examine the relationship between religion and mythology in a novel way. The latter can be studied not just as an early stage in the religiosity establishment, but as a transformed organic part of the world and national religions that have developed. This, in turn, offers promising opportunities for a deeper study of the spiritual content of different cultures.

In this connection, E. Cassirer proposes studying the myth as an ethnopsychological reality represented in the relevant symbolism and imaginative system of myth-making. According to the thinker, the starting point of this reality is not the anthropological view of myth as ‘the empirically-real unity of human nature - as the initial fundamental causal factor of the mythological process’ (L. Feuerbach and his followers), and not the relation to myth as direct reflection of the existence of the ‘absolute’, a God in mythological reality (Schelling).

Instead, E. Cassirer suggests studying the myth as a phenomenon of culture, having its own immanent logic of development and structuredness in the unity of objective and subjective components in the movement of the human spirit. Accordingly, “the myth is not a representation of a given being, but it is a special typical way of constructing an image in which the consciousness goes

beyond the simple perception of sensory impressions and begins to confront it” [4, p. 27].

According to E. Cassirer, the myth is born at the intersection of “transcendental” and physiological and psychological analysis, which results in “purely intellectual acts”: “spatial ordering of the world of perception”, “acts of “identification, discrimination, comparison and subordination”, etc. [4, p. 44].

E. Cassirer thinks that the study of mythology allows revealing the diversity of the world, cultural symbolism, cultural phenomena in contrast to scholastic deductive knowledge, striving to reduce a variety of facts and phenomena to general abstract laws. According to E. Cassirer, it is necessary to see manifestations of the higher ‘rationality’ of the Universe, in the ‘accidental’ represented by mythology. Such a setup is extremely promising for studies of cultures oriented toward deciphering mythological symbols and towards seeking appropriate ‘reasonableness’ and ‘expediency’ for the existence and even the survival of certain ethnic groups, peoples, nations [5]. In this sense, no myth is accidental. It is the recording of ideas about the world, which allows building interaction with nature and in society on the ways of searching for harmonious relations with the environment and its creative transformation (myth as a project, an ideal, etc.) [6].

In this respect, the myth, as E. Cassirer believes, not so much gives an answer to the question ‘how’ something is happening, as gives an answer about ‘what’, ‘whereof’ and ‘where into’. For this purpose, he wants to see in its face these ‘whereof’ and ‘where into’ in full realistic certainty’ [4, p. 67].

Such a function of the myth as the ordering of the notions of the world singled out by E. Cassirer is also interesting. One way or another, these ideas are subject-sensory and specific-figurative in nature, including in relation to the world of ‘ideality’. While rational scientific cognition attempts building the order in the identification of the hierarchy of cause-and-effect relationships, studying, among other things, various mythological representations; the myth is aimed at building integral pictures of the world through the synthesis of various subject-sensory images. Thus, in its creative activity, a person gets the opportunity not only to acquire the inner meanings of its existence and the system of coordinates in the transformation of the world but also the models and patterns in its activity, which are often the ‘outstripping’ ones [7]. It is enough to give an example of predictive socio-cultural design focused on creating ‘non-existent things, yet’ in the form of ideal goals requiring ‘mythological accompaniments’ to preserve the energy and creative power of the project [8, 9].

The special role of the myth lies in the implementation of dividing lines between the ‘sacred’ and ‘profane’ things without which the culture cannot exist. Myth ‘as something incomparable and original’ provides the individuality and uniqueness of immediate perceptions of the surrounding world. This, in turn, it is a prerequisite of the ‘miracle’ and ‘secret’ doctrine, without which the belief in what lies beyond the limits of dull pragmatism and rationalism is impossible (‘The world is nothing without surprise’ - M. Svetlov). According to E. Cassirer, ‘the sacredness arises’ in this way – “a kind of mythological-religious primitive

feeling is associated with the fact of a spatial 'threshold'. Mysterious customs, which are the same or similar almost everywhere - are an expression of worship of the threshold and fear of its sacredness ... It is the sacredness of the threshold that originally guarded the abode of God against any enemy attack and invasion, and then it guarded the country, the field, and the house in the form of boundaries and other landmarks". Further: "the transition from one mythological and religious zone to another is always associated with carefully observed transition rituals" [4, p. 117].

According to E. Cassirer, the interpenetration of 'internal' and 'external' things as a manifestation of the organicity of real life processes is also an important thing in mythological thinking. This organicity becomes the basis for the subsequent formation of artistic forms in various branches of art, originally using mythological images and heroes, and then artistically expressive ('external') means of myth-making in showing the inner world of a man and the inner meaning of certain events [10].

Hence, the sources of legitimation of certain myths that correspond to the emerging mentality of the people, ethnos, and nation are becoming clear [11].

Based on the example of mythological thinking, E. Cassirer concludes that any symbolic form of reflecting the world is able to independently establish the boundaries between personal self-consciousness and real reality, and this represents one of the cultural functions of myth.

E. Cassirer thinks that mythological thinking is the most important prerequisite for the development of the individual psyche of a person. Under the influence of mythological representations, the soul world of the personality is formed as the background of one's own experiences of mythological fantasies and images instead of the standard representations about the soul as a certain substance set from the outside. It is about the importance of children's fantasies for the development of the child's spiritual world that C.G. Jung wrote, in which the mythological images and characters occupy not the last place. In this respect, it is difficult to overestimate the importance for individuation of the inner world in the socialization and inculturation of the personality. Still, modern pedagogy and psychology remain in demand for immersion of the modern person in some or other mythologems, contributing to the acquisition by it of a unique psychological experience of faith in the 'ideal' things in visible and visual forms (for example, in fairy folklore). This demand does not contradict the existence of religiosity as a condition for the spiritual and moral development of a person, but it is one of the variations of individual ideas about the transcendent world in the conventional space of religious symbols and meanings.

The myth of Cinderella adopted by American cinema for spreading the American dream of achieving success through work and personal virtues may be provided as an example of modern mythologization of the surrounding reality, positively influencing the spiritual and moral world of a person.

Moreover, according to the thinker, the soul world of the person represented in various mythological images is much more often 'split' into separate mythological characters, incarnations. But this is exactly one of the

prerequisites of reflexive thinking, which promotes a person to the subsequent synthesis of different ideas about the surrounding world, people, and itself in the form of an integral religious worldview [12].

It is important to note that for many people who have not come to the religious perception of the world yet, these or other mythologems can become a kind of palliative that promotes spiritual and moral self-improvement and positive self-realization in the socium. For example, for many Soviet people the idea of communism, remaining in the mythology space, made it possible to create a powerful Soviet civilization with all its contradictions and problems, as well as a new type of person - a Soviet man who ultimately defeated Nazism.

Of course, not every myth being constructed is a positive one (for example, the myth of the 'superman' in Nazi Germany) and has a long-term nature. This does not downplay the enormous role of mythological self-comprehension in the processes of socio-cultural development of society and man [13].

Accordingly, the desirable thing is the national state cultural policy aimed at preserving cultural traditions, the way of life that ensures the cultural identity of one or another ethnos of territories on the basis of a single elaborated cultural and mythological 'language' and mythological landmarks for residents of a common cultural and ecological space - Russia [14].

3. Results

Let us consider the results of myth research by a number of thinkers under the methodology discussed above. An outstanding philosopher and theologian P.A. Florensky made a significant contribution to the study of the perception of the world of symbols and their mythological origin. P.A. Florensky thinks that for the adequate perception of symbols, the principle of 'reverse perspective' is important, which can be clearly seen in the example of icons. Here the represented 'far' becomes 'near', and vice versa. Thereby, the linearity of the perception of sacral meanings in the icon, the possibility to 'reconcile' and soulfully learn 'distant' symbols and meanings is rejected.

In the iconography, there is also a diversity in the depiction of religious themes and plots. "The drawing is constructed so that if looking at its different parts, the eye looked, changing its place." [15] Therefore, it is proposed to the viewer to look at the same image from different angles of view. In this case, an important methodological principle of entering certain symbols into a culture is seen: a refusal from a linear and unambiguous reading of the symbols, and a search for the possibilities of their various interpretations depending on the social and cultural contexts. Only with a multifaceted interpretation, the 'works' symbol is actively included in the social practice and in the processes of self-cognition of the individual and society.

According to P.A. Florenskiy, the refusal in general of any perspective in the depiction of the symbolic thing is the manifestation of orientation in the imaging of symbols on the inner world of a man itself, giving this image the

signs of sacredness. So it was, for example, among the ancient Egyptians and the ancient Chinese who abandoned the perspective in painting “for the sake of religious objectivity and super-personal metaphysics” [15, p. 45].

Therefore, the perspective is the result of individualism and is present mainly in applied art. It also became the basis for the performance in postmodern art. In pursuit of observing the perspective (i.e. a sharp division into ‘near’ and ‘far’, ‘one’s own’ and ‘someone else’s’), the symbolic is gradually replaced by pure projectivity, a permanent renewal of reality, and loss of basic senses and meanings. P.A. Florenskiy thinks that pictorial art is becoming more decorative or naturalistic, departing from the true ‘truth of life’, i.e. its spiritual content. The socium itself turns into the scenery and is theatricalized.

According to the logic of the ‘perspectivists’, “the breach of the uniqueness of the point of view, the uniqueness of the horizon and the uniqueness of scale is a breach of the perspective unity of the image” [15, p. 63]. In contrast to this logic, the feature of spiritual space is as follows: “the further is something in it, the greater, and the closer - the less. This is the reverse perspective.” [15, p. 66] In this case, the meaning of any socio-cultural projects and reforms is also interpreted differently - from distant goals, it is necessary to go to the near one, in order to really improve something in the spiritual life of a person and society. The role of the relevant myth as a ‘distant’ goal embodied in the present, in this case, becomes the decisive one.

In his famous work ‘Iconostasis’, P.A. Florensky wrote about the importance of symbolizing the ‘invisible’ of spiritual world for understanding the culture. In his opinion, there is a contact between “the visible and the invisible world. However, their mutual difference is so great that the question of the border of their contact may arise. It separates them, but it also unites them.” [15, p. 5].

According to P. A. Florensky, the visible and invisible means ‘Earth’ and ‘Heaven’, respectively. Thus, the very formulation of the problem has its theological roots. The invisible world does not exist for the consistent materialist, there is only the unknown world. Consequently, for the immersion in the problems of the relationship between the ‘visible’ and the ‘invisible’ there exists a worldview choice, from which the humanitarian-oriented researcher cannot escape. If he recognizes the existence of these worlds in the person itself, then he recognizes the very formulation of the problem. If not, then there is no either problem for it [16].

When considering the process of creating an icon, P.A. Florensky touches upon the problems of ‘face’ and ‘mask’, having special significance for mastering the inner spiritual content of cultural symbols and values in one’s own sociocultural practice. For this purpose he introduces another category - the ‘holy face’ as follows: “the ontological contrariety... of visions from scarcity and visions from fullness can best be characterized by the contraposition of the words ‘mask’ and the ‘holy face’. But there is still another word - ‘face’... A face is what we see in the daytime experience, with what the realities of this world appear to us.” “A face is almost synonymous with the word phenomenon, but the

phenomenon of precisely the day perception.” The holy face is a transformed, embellished face, brought into line with the artist’s plan. “The holy face is the manifestation of precisely the ontology”, of the true face. The image of God shall mean “the ontological gift of God, the spiritual foundation of every person”. The God’s likeness should mean “the potency, the ability of spiritual perfection, the power to formalize the entire empirical personality in the image of God, in its entire composition, i.e. the possibility to embody the image of God, our inmost wealth, in life, in person, and thus to reveal it in person”. “The holy face is the likeness of God accomplished in the face.” “In Greek, the hale face is called the idea ... of the revealed spiritual essence, the contemplated eternal meaning, the heavenly beauty of some reality.” [17] “The mask is the striking antithesis to holy face... The face is a phenomenon of some reality and is evaluated by us precisely as something mediating between the cognoscitive and the cognizable, as the opening of the essence of the cognoscitive to our gaze and our speculation. The face would not make sense outside this function, that is, outside the revelation of external reality to us. But the meaning becomes negative, when, instead of revealing to us the image of God, it not only gives nothing in this direction but also deceives us, deceitfully pointing to something non-existent. Then it is a mask.” [17, p. 29]

While in ancient times masks had been a kind of icons, in the course of decay and disappearance of sacredness in these masks, the deconsecration of the cult in relation to ancient religiosity, a modern mask emerged as a deception that hides the true face of a person. P.A. Florensky figuratively calls this mask the ‘astral corpse’. The splitting of the face from the person occurs, and through the mask, the person becomes a victim of own passions and vices. Further, the thinker makes a deepest conclusion related to the existence of spiritual culture as such: “the image of God does not need to be transfigured, it itself is the light and purity, but, on the contrary, transfigures by itself, as a creative form, the whole empirical personality, the whole composition of a man, its body” [17, p. 34].

Thus, the existence of some higher reality that cannot be ‘culturally’ processed is postulated. It transforms by itself and generates true culture. This contradicts the established view of culture as of the process of treatment of natural material and the development of technologies of certain kinds of human activity claimed by the socium. Thus, the culture itself can be understood in different ways depending on what shall be taken as a basis for its existence - technology, patterns of activity or spirit.

At the same time, P. A. Florensky thinks that the very fact of the presence of symbols indicative of a higher reality is a proof of the existence of this reality itself.

Further, P. A. Florensky identifies four categories of icons, depending on the origin source, as follows: “1) biblical... 2) portrait... 3) written according to the legend... 4) and, finally, icons revealed, painted according to the spiritual experience of the icon-painter” [17, p. 55]. Accordingly, the semiosis of culture

can also be subdivided into a verbal, pictorial, historical, sacral series of the infosphere.

The study by P. A. Florensky of the nature of cultural symbols in the spiritual and religious context can be regarded as a significant achievement, in demand in the studies of culture.

For a complete cultural analysis of mythological symbols, it makes sense to consider other studies of myths in the historical perspective. Here we can distinguish the work of Schelling who distinguishes the creative potential of myth-making in the history of cultures and civilizations.

According to Schelling, myth is primary in relation to history. Providentialism, the higher will and the influence of the absolute implement in the historical process through it. This view of mythology is of particular interest to researchers of the history of culture who study the role of mental structures in the development of civilizations and societies.

K. Marx had an opposite view of myths in the historical context. He believed that myths disappeared with the man's increasing domineering over the forces of nature, and accordingly a bourgeois pragmatic civilization was no longer able to preserve and develop the myth-making. Thus, the presence of mythology or its absence is connected with the position of the researchers themselves, but not with the very existence of myths as such.

The researchers note that in the second half of the nineteenth century basically two main schools of studying myths were opposed to each other. The first one is 'linguistic' (A. Kun, V. Shvarts, M. Muller, A.D. Gubernatis, F.I. Buslaev) ('from language to myth'). The second one is 'naturalistic' or 'mythological' (from nature to myths, including in the form of 'remnants').

A. Bergson suggested the original approach to the need for myth-making. He insisted that myths are a kind of reaction in the name of preserving nature, biological life in the form of a protest against the negative consequences of intellectualism, ultimately destroying the ecology and the natural environment [18].

E.M. Meletinsky, one of the prominent researchers of myths, singles out the Fraser's special role in studying the poetics of myth-making. In his opinion, "Fraser had a great influence on the science of the myth, not only with the thesis about the priority of the ritual over the myth, but much more with his research ... of myths and agrarian calendar cults of" dying and resurrecting (more accurately, reborn, returning) gods, representing archaic parallels to the plot of the New Testament and the Christian mysterial ritualism. The Fraser's mythologeme, and more precisely, the 'ritualeme' of the periodically deceased and replaced king-sorcerer who is magically responsible for the harvest and tribal well-being is of particular interest [19]. The idea of the victim proposed by Fraser can be considered to be a framework for the religious and mythological consciousness.

It is also pointed out that myths are inseparably linked with the ritual. The latter is the visual-behavioural form of the expression of the mythological consciousness. No less important is the connection between the myth and the ritual as a practical aspect of myth-making.

“In the system of primitive culture, the myth and rite constitute two of its aspects: verbal and effective, ‘theoretical’ and ‘practical’. Bronislaw Malinovsky discovered such an understanding of the inner unity of the myth and rite, their lively connection, as well as the general practical function.” [19, p. 31] This researcher had drawn attention to the importance of mythological representations of the world for those ethnic groups and societies in which the awareness of the interconnectedness to the indigenous population of a certain region remains true.

E. Durkheim made a significant contribution to the study of myths as a cultural phenomenon, focusing on the opposition of the sacred and profane in the social and cultural practice of myth-making [20]. Thanks to the Levi-Bruhl’s research of myths, it can be concluded that mythological thinking stimulates creative thinking and respect for existing being, unlike a logged self-confident attitude toward an ‘insipient’ world that is not capable of surprising anything. This feature of myths can be evaluated as a resource in opposing cynicism in the formation of a spiritually-moral culture of the individual and society [21].

On the other hand, the underestimation by this researcher of the possibilities of myth in explaining the surrounding world and seeing therein only one way of achieving social solidarity limits the very possibility of studying the problems of social life through prevailing mythologems. Due to this, it should be noted that until now in Russia there has been a special type of sociality that develops under the influence of myths, and therefore this influence can be studied here in the most pronounced form.

As opposed to K. Jung with his doctrine of archetypes, some foreign researchers [22] draw attention to the intransigence of the psychological aspect of myths as a possibility of explaining some universal properties of the human psyche and the cultural and historical study of mythology. In our opinion, the most significant in this respect is not the confusion of the psychological and ethnic aspects of mythologies and rituals, but the mutual influence of these aspects on each other as a certain social and cultural norm. Otherwise, there appears in society a real threat of spreading social schizophrenia in the form of different equal religions, sects within the framework of one ethnic group taken away from the national identity.

M. Eliade - one of the greatest researchers of myths - draws attention to the importance of mythology as projects for ordering the world after chaos, and therefore in this capacity, they remain in demand in any historical epoch [23]. It is important only to discover the relevant universals of myths in the context of cultural and civilizational development.

K. Levi-Strauss - the prominent researcher of culture - highlighted such a feature of mythological thinking as an opportunity to synthesize artistic-figurative and scientific thinking, which remains especially significant for humanitarian research.

According to K. Levi-Strauss, mythological thinking is characterized by binary oppositions ('life' and 'death', 'light' and 'darkness', 'good' and 'evil', etc.). At the same time, the myth through its own logic helps resolving the contradictions between these oppositions through mediation in accordance with the mythological 'bricolage'. The essence of this process is in the smoothing of these contradictions through transitional forms (for example, life and death are replaced by a softer antithesis of the world of plants and animals, and then the antithesis of the world of carnivores and herbivores). Thus, the myth manifests itself through the softening of the rigid oppositions of the opposites, finding the possibilities of their 'withdrawal' [24]. This can also be important for the preservation of humanity in socium, instead of a rigid confrontation of worldviews, social positions, ideological attitudes, in order to find viable compromises and positive social solutions.

In the study of myths, Roland Barth singled out the process of transforming the signified into the signifier. At the same time, in his opinion, in spite of some depletion of the content of sign-symbolic mythological forms without myths, there are no ideas capable of seizing the masses. In addition, according to R. Barth, the myth helps comprehending the history. The myth is an opportunity to constantly search for new meanings in the socium and in the history. R. Barth's research allows drawing a conclusion that through the independence of myths in relation to the historical time it is possible to reveal their 'eternal meanings' based on studying their structure.

Moreover, according to Potrebnya, the myth reflects the reality that existed before the consciousness of the man. At the same time, Potrebnya thinks that the metaphorical and symbolic character of the myth brings us closer to reality, and does not detract from it, since mythological representations are based on specific sensory perceptions, which have assumed a mythopoietic form [25].

4. Discussion

The proceedings of the outstanding philosopher A.F. Losev, who claims that the myth connects the ideal and the real, are the unique result of studying the myth by different researchers [26]. In fact, familiarizing with the mythopoietic picture of the world can be considered as one of the important mechanisms of the person's inculturation towards the ability to synthesize the physical and ideal reality in perception and social behaviour.

According to Losev, one of the meanings of the myth consists in the constant reproduction of ideas about the person as an ideal design, significant for society on the example of mythological images and plots. A.F. Losev says the myth constantly returns people and the society to the beginnings of creation and to eternity.

On the example of mythological thinking, it is possible to conclude that the cultural development of society evolves much more slowly than its civilizational development and often contradicts this civilizational development. The culture often develops according to other laws.

In addition, mythological and scientific thinkings are the two sides of one thinking that cognizes reality as rational and emotional, logical and figurative, etc. Therefore, these two sides provide the objectivity of cognition and can pass one into another. Mythological themes related to spiritual and moral issues, as well as to birth and death, the survival of a person in the system of social ecology may form a special topic for human and social studies.

Ultimately, myths largely determine the identity and sustainability of the culture of society, the nation, and the ethnos. In this case, the myth is formed by the socium itself, and also creates the latter. The myth forms many ideal patterns for the social life of society.

The mythology of representations ensures the acceptance of the arches, the initial reference points in the historical time, and the evaluation of the events taking place. Otherwise, we come to complete relativism in the choice of the arches, leading to a meaninglessness of the history and levelling the value of the value-conscious choice of the ethnos, the people, and the individual.

The myth is cosmic and at the same time, the anthropomorphic one. Mythology sets a variety of opposites as a source of movement and diversity in thinking, axiological approaches to the perception of reality and behaviour.

It is worth noting that the mythological world of symbols searches for the links between heterogeneous essences, integrating perception and worldview, which is not confined solely to poetic imagery and to the integration of diversity into a single indivisibility.

According to A.F. Losev, ‘the myth is life itself’. “Myth is not an ideal being, but a vital and perceivable, material reality and a corporeal, to the animality bodily reality ... The myth is not a scientific and, in particular, a primitive scientific construction.” [26, p. 38-39] Thus, least of all myth is the product of thinking. This is the very life reality experienced in the direct experience of the man.

Losev denies the opinion that “the mythology precedes the science, that the science emerges from the myth, that to some historical epochs, especially to the modern one, mythical consciousness is totally uncharacteristic for us, that science conquers myth” [26, p. 41]. In his opinion, science and myth lie in different planes of mastering and reflecting the world. Therefore, their opposition and direct comparison are meaningless.

At the same time, the science “is not only accompanied by the mythology but also really feeds on it, drawing the original intuitions from it” [26, p. 42]. “In the Kant’s philosophy, the rationalist-subjectivistic and separate-individualistic mythology celebrates, perhaps, its maximum victory.” [26, p. 43]. Thus, the maximum rationalism is mythological. Then the maximum emotionality is also extra-mythological.

“It always happens that the provable and the deductionable are based on the unprovable and self-evident; and the mythology is the mythology only if it is not proved, if it cannot and should not be proved.” [26, p. 42-43] Thus, the obvious is a myth.

A.F. Losev critically assesses many ‘objective’ evidences of the triumph of reason and science as the mythological ones. In his opinion, “Newton’s mechanics is based on the mythology of nihilism. This is fully consistent with the New European doctrine of the endless progress of society and culture”. “This should also include the doctrine of the universal social equation, which also has all the signs of mythological-social nihilism. The theory of infinite divisibility of matter is completely mythological.” [26, p. 45] Thus, the belief in progress, in the evolution of society and culture, as well as the idea of universal equality, are special products of mythological thinking.

The following judgments of A.F. Losev on the ‘mythological’ nature of science are also interesting: “Science ... is always mythological”. This does not mean that Science and mythology are identical. “Science itself is non-mythological. But ... this is an abstract science that is not being used anywhere. As soon as we have started talking about real Science, i.e. about that which is characteristic of a certain historical epoch, we are dealing with the application of pure, abstract science ... every real science is mythological, but science in itself bears no relation to mythology.” “When’ science ‘destroys the ‘myth’, it means only that one mythology is struggling with another mythology.’ ‘Our Physics and Mechanics ... is a world of a homogeneous space in which the mechanically moving mechanisms exist.” [26, p. 46-47] It can be assumed that the main difference between the humanities and the natural and technical sciences lies in the integration of the former into the existing life phenomena, the construction of phenomenology on this basis, and the formulation of laws directly in the process of observing real, ‘animate’ reality. Respectively, the humanities must establish the boundaries of the explanation and influence of scientific and engineering sciences on reality according to the ‘do no harm’ principle.

A.F. Losev opposes the reality of the myth to the irreality of ‘normal’ science: “Science as such cannot destroy the myth from any side. It only realizes it and removes from it a certain rational, for example, logical or numerical plan.” [26, p. 48] “Science is not interested in the reality of its object; and the ‘law of nature’ says nothing about the reality of itself, not to mention the reality of things and phenomena that obey this ‘law’. Needless to say, the myth in this respect is quite the opposite of the scientific formula. The myth is completely and entirely real and objective; and even in it, there can never be raised the question of whether or not the relevant mythical phenomena are real. Mythical consciousness operates only with real objects, with the most certain and real phenomena. However, in mythical objectness, it is possible to state about the existence of different degrees of reality, but this has nothing in common with the absence of every moment of reality in a pure scientific formula.” In the myth, “it is not out-of-beingness, but the fate of beingness itself, the play of different

degrees of the reality of being itself” [26, p. 52]. Thus, through the study of the myth, we cognize the existing and not a fictitious reality.

Further: for pure science, its “pure semantic content, strictly speaking, does not need even a finished and complete truth. In order that Science was a science, only a hypothesis is needed and nothing more. The essence of pure Science is only to set the hypothesis and replace it with another, more perfect if there are grounds therefore.” “All these endless physicists, chemists, mechanics and astronomers have completely theological ideas about their ‘forces’, ‘laws’, ‘matter’, ‘electrons’, ‘gases’, ‘liquids’, ‘bodies’, ‘warmth’, ‘electricity’, etc. If they were pure physicists, chemists, etc., they would limit themselves to finding only the laws themselves and nothing else ‘that’ would be interpreted only as hypotheses.” [26, p. 54-55] Accordingly, as soon as people try to explain something, they inevitably think mythologically (a dream is one of the types of the myth that explains reality - see [27]).

“A myth is never just a hypothesis, only a mere possibility of truth.” “The myth always has an emphasis on facts existing exactly as facts. Their being is an absolute being.” “The myth has its own mythical truth, mythical authenticity. The myth distinguishes or can distinguish between the true and the apparent and the represented from the real. But all this happens not in a scientific, but in a purely mythical way.” “A mythical consciousness is characterized by a category of truth. If for any myth the question of ‘reality’ and ‘ostensibility’ was completely indifferent, then no struggle within the most mythical consciousness would be possible.” [26, p. 55-57] A search for ‘truth’ and ‘factuality’ in the myth is a manifestation of truly human aspirations for an infinite knowledge of the surrounding world and itself.

Moreover, the disclosure of the phenomenology of myth by A.F. Losev allows us to conclude that mythological thinking appears where there is sensory cognition filled with emotions.

Since, according to the philosopher, the myth is inherently unscientific, it can be studied as an objective reality existing outside the scientific reality under construction.

The myth is a symbol. The symbol “is a symbol always only in relation to something else. This is especially interesting because one and the same expressive form, depending on the method of correlation with other semantic expressive or material forms, can be a symbol, a scheme, and an allegory at the same time.” [26, p. 74] “The myth is never just a scheme or only an allegory, but always first and foremost a symbol, and already being a symbol, it may contain schematic, allegorical and complicated-symbolic layers.” [26, p. 89-90] A symbolic view of the world is, first of all, a mythological view.

5. Conclusions

The myth is a combination of poetry and reality but this is also the ‘humanized’ reality, since it has not lost its connection with the presence of the man in the world as a special social and natural phenomenon. The A.F Losev’s

theory on the myth makes it possible to conclude that the ideas of the interconnectedness of the objective world and its transformations perceived on an intuitive level lie behind the mythological thinking and its representations.

The mythology of perception and representations is the basis of perception of the real world. The richer the ordinary experience is, the more mythological and symbolic it is. In addition, according to A.F. Losev, the myth and the relevant symbols combine the substances of natural elements and the space-time characteristics of these substances. This, in its turn, is a prerequisite of the systemic vision of the reality.

Thus, the myth makes a person internally independent of substantiality. It is a symptomatology and manifestation of the essential forces of man, phenomena, and events. The history also cannot be understood without studying the myths through which the meaning of the history is revealed.

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