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THE MYTH AS A "WORK IN MOVEMENT" IN THE DYNAMICS OF COMMUNICATIONS

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Abstract

The article addresses the issue of the functions of the traditional myth in modern social communications. The authors of the article state that the myth today exists as a sign structure and as a mechanism ensuring the reproduction of information in the dynamics of social communications. The authors analyse two planes of the existence of the myth in modern communications: in diachrony and synchrony based on the communication models proposed by Y. Lotman and his understanding of the semiosphere as a space, which is a condition and a prerequisite for communication. It is argued that the mythological image (as a role of the message) and ritual (as a code) create a significant reality simultaneously with other elements of the structure of social communications, existing in the diachronic aspect from the point of view of the communicative approach. It is concluded that the myth exists in the structure of social communications through a few interrelated functions: reflection, designation, dialogue and conflict. The myth in social communications is a real semiotic process; reality realized in the semiosphere of modern culture. We see the myth as a symbolic form with a new content. The problem of the existence of a mythological image in the modern communication space should be considered as identifying the specific features of semiotic mechanisms, allowing them to be the best means of transmitting the mythological image and the associated ritual.

Keywords: Culture, myth, social communications, sign, semiosphere, mythological image.

1. Introduction

Old symbols, reinterpreted and renewed, can be met in the new poetry, folklore youth art, mass media and on the covers of modern CDs in the culture of the 21st century. "Logos and emblems, encountered in almost every moment of our daily lives, serve mostly as a tool to track down the mythical belief past to the present" (Cakir, 2013, p.53). Thus, we can consider a myth not as an echo of the past, frozen in its development, but as a process, since its dynamics is actualized and manifested in terms of its development and disappearing, and therefore, we can talk of the myth as of the reality or an area of realized opportunities.

Communication provides both information transfer and reproduction of the message and affects the behaviour of individuals. A feature of modern reality is the strong influence of the mythological image on the communicative interaction. Today the myth is a symbolic form with a new content. The problem of a mythological image in the modern communication space is to identify the specific features of semiotic mechanisms to transmit the mythological image and the associated ritual. This is important for solving the problems stated in this article. The key to understanding new myths as part of modern communications is to see them as ideas resulting from prolonged exposure to images.

1.1. Literature review

The literature on mythology and related problems is boundless. Almost every outstanding thinker – a philosopher or artist, a philologist or linguist, a historian or psychologist, a physicist or a mystic, turned to mythological problematics and related philosophy in one way or another. Ethnology of the 20th century proved that the myth as the dominant mode of thinking is specific to archaic cultures, but as a certain "level" or "fragment" it can be present in various cultures and literature (D. Durkheim, L. Lévy-Bruhl, E. Cassirer, C. Lévi-Strauss). The authors focus on such a feature of mythological thinking as the ability to transform things, objects and phenomena of objective reality into a certain way structured semiotic reality, subject reality.

E. Tylor, J. Frazer, W. Turner, B. Malinowski and other representatives of the evolutionary school, characterize mythological thinking as largely rational, and view the myth as subject description of mythology. Their views were analyzed to understand the nature of objective reality from the perspective of mythological thinking. A meta-language was developed in the studies of Russian mythologists of the 19th century, who develop the linguistic concept of myth (A.N. Afanasyev, F.I.Buslayev, A.A.Potebnya), for describing myths, including the establishment of semiotic oppositions and the rules of their syntagmatic transformation and text development (Strelnik, 2018). A new approach to the problem of the generation of early forms of religion, myth and ritual is considered in the socio-psychological studies of D. Durkheim and L. Lévy-Bruhl (Segal & Scotland, 2007). Introducing the concept of participation, Levy-Bruhl was perhaps one of the first to say that the savage perceives the world as one; he showed how mythological thinking functions, how it generalizes, remaining concrete and using signs. In the theory of the myth of E. Cassirer, mythology is considered along with language and art as a symbolic, but closed form of culture, united by the nature of functioning and the way of modelling the surrounding world. Cassirer states, that mythological thinking can generalize only by becoming a sign (Cassirer, 1953). The

idea of "constructing" a symbolic world in the myth offered by Cassirer is very deep (Santana & Elizabeth, 2016). Psychological school (W. Wundt, S. Freud, K.-G.Jung) applying the methods of psychoanalysis to the study of myths, showed the connection of the psychological and spiritual foundations of the human psyche with the symbolic design of the mythological space. The structuralist theory of C. Levi-Strauss is similar with the concept of Jung in many respects. He also believed that the myth affects not only the sphere of our thinking, but also relates to the fullness of human existence. But the unconscious, according to C. Levi-Strauss, is a hidden mechanism of sign systems, and the myth is a complexly organized sign system. A.F. Losev and V.Ya. Holosovker determine that the mythic consciousness knows and sees the miracle as a symbol, and the sensuality of myth embraces objective forms exploring the deeper meaning of mythological sense-images. In this regard, the work of Yu.M. Lotman, B.A. Uspensky on the issues of semiotic mechanisms of culture was essential for the purposes of this study. Bart (2000) studied the myth in the context of semiology. He, firstly, interprets myth as a word, secondly, refers mythology to semiology, considering the myth as a "secondary semiological system" that is created "based on an already existing semiological chain".

2. Problem Statement

The development of social relations is always accompanied by a deepening of the relationship of communication, and the ramification of a person's relations with a person, i.e. development of social communication processes in its mass forms. So, a sign situation is created as a set of conditions and elements in which and through which the communication process is carried out and the communication space of society is created.

3. Research Questions

A new appeal to the myth in a communicative situation is focus of a search for a way out of a crisis today.

4. Purpose of the Study

Mythological signifiers play an extremely significant role in the life of human society. New myths suggest the reversibility of time and the absolute sequence of events. The myth plays a compensating role in this sense: it provides support in understanding the world. The traditional myth was an attempt to answer the question about the mechanisms of an incomprehensible natural or social phenomenon.

5. Research Methods

The sign vehicles of culture play a very important role in the modern world. Lotman (1996) wrote about this. We rely on his research and define semiotics as a method of the humanities that penetrates various disciplines and is determined not by the nature of the object, but by the method of its analysis. In modern reality a person creates a special reality of linguistic forms, artistic and mythological images on the one hand, and on the other, various semiotic systems actively form a person immersed in them,

thereby determining his position in society. The myth, as a symbolic structure, is immanently present both in the cultural space of the society and in the consciousness of an individual, simultaneously with the created scientific picture of the world and everyday "common sense", which determines the heterogeneous, multi-layered nature of reality. In this reality, the transcendental subject is replaced by a subject that is part of symbolism. Man creates symbols all his life. A symbol is an intellectual construction that helps a person to cognize the world (Innis, 2016). This position is reflected in the works of E. Cassirer, A.N. Whitehead et al. Whitehead determines the method of how a sign influences a person by creating symbolic relationships. These triples are "beliefs, emotions, customs", "ideas, images, emotions" (Whitehead, 1967) etc. Our conclusions about the ways of the existence of myth in communications will be based on the principles of the philosophy of symbolism of Whitehead (1967).

6. Findings

6.1. Social communications as a form of existence of myth

The myth exists in society due to semiosphere. Lotman (1996) wrote: "… participants in communication must have prior semiotic cultural experience, it precedes any semiotic act" (p. 163). Consequently, semiotic space is a necessary condition for communication. The leading role here is played not by informing, not by the transmission of a message in space, but by the phenomenon of complicity supporting the existence of commonality in time (Carey, 1989). The person thus identifies himself with a community, using the thing as a sign. Communication style does not mean what you say, but how you do it. This distinction is very significant, since most people react not only to what message was transmitted, but to how it is pronounced and formed, i.e. on the style or manner of the message. This is a unique personal style of communication, when the very nature of the communicative process is based on the principle of belonging, complicity, peculiar to a greater degree to mythopoetic consciousness. As Ferrer (2018) noted, "... mythology begins only then and there, when and where the personality appears" (p. 375). Thus, communication processes in which the subjective principle is relevant take a form of socially oriented communication. This socially oriented form of communication, firstly, has the most pronounced semiotic possibilities, and, secondly, provides the indirect nature of communication. The appearance of the sign involves the introduction of specific information in communication and attitude to it. "A sign is a kind of "material" in which consciousness builds up and works, –Bakhtin (1986) emphasized. …It is necessary that two individuals are socially organized" (p.16). In this context, the authors regard the myth as a "work in movement", following the thesis of Eco (1979) that "Work in movement" (p. 62) is the possibility of numerous and diverse personal initiatives, but not an amorphous invitation to indiscriminate complicity. This is an invitation that gives the performer a chance to orient himself in the world, which is always the way the author intended it. The authors argue that the main structure in the translation of the myth is the mythological image and the associated ritual as the unity of the "Work in movement". The image merges two planes together: the external – the image, and all that can be perceived by the senses (form), and the internal – the symbolic (meaning), which this image is endowed with. Person as a thinking being is endowed with both logical and imaginative thinking. Mythological thinking as thinking in images is a message that is determined more by its intention than by its literal meaning, and so to say

immobilizes, sterilizes, presents as timeless, obscures this intention (Galan, 2017). The myth arises under certain circumstances, and the mythological message has a twofold consequence for its reading. It is at the same time a notification and statement of fact. At the same time, we actively use the language of the myth to read the text since the myth is understood by the authors as a semiotic system, which is formed based on a natural language. E. Cassirer wrote about the connection between myth and language (Lanigan, 2017, p.135). He considers the language as a necessary basis for the formation of a myth. Any mythological message broadcast by our figurative memory is a communicative act.

In this regard, we turn to the communication models proposed by Yu. Lotman. He relied on a universal communicative model developed in 1960 by R.O. Yakobson for various situations, which linked a wide range of problems of language, art and, more broadly, culture with the theory of communication (Todorović, Čuden, Košak, & Toporišič, 2017). If the communicative system "I - HE" provides only the transfer of a certain constant amount of information, and in the channel "I - I" its qualitative transformation takes place, which leads to the restructuring of the "I" itself (Pilipoveca, 2016), which is important in the process of translation of the mythological image. The purpose of the myth is the subordination of the addressee to any idea, its introduction to the subconscious level. The translation of the mythological image suggests that there is a socially oriented communication link between individuals. The communication is an integral part of social being and a means of forming and functioning of consciousness, both individual and public, the mythological message, in turn, greatly influences the formation and functioning of various public institutions. The process of connectedness with the surrounding reality is carried out through the inclusion in the semiosphere of society. And in this case, the mechanism of translation of the mythological image and the associated ritual is identical with the mechanism of oriented communication. This comparison becomes possible, since oriented communication is defined as a communicative structure that is highly oriented towards the interlocutor.

It will be recalled that we consider the myth as a "work in movement" defining a plurality of interpretations of reality. And our understanding of the myth is somewhat different from the position of R. Bart in this. R. Bart wrote that the goal of myths is the immobilization of the world; they should give an impressive picture of the universal economic mechanism with a once and for all established hierarchy. However, it is the constant variability of the myth that makes it part of social communication. This statement can be proved by examining the main functions of the myth in conjunction with elements of the communicative act.

6.2. The unity of the mythological image and ritual as the basis of social communications

The classical structure of the communicative act was described by (Jakobson, 1960; Waugh, 1980). It includes the following parts: code, contact, message, context, addressee, addresser. We consider them in more detail in conjunction with the structure of the mythological image and ritual.

Code (system, langue). Knowledge of the code characteristic of the interlocutor is a guarantee of effectiveness. Lotman (1992) notes that language is a code plus its history (p.163). Ritual, a language created for a given purpose, is a code. The benefit of a communication partner is that he is different. The collective goal of the participants of the communicative act is to develop not the identity of those models in the form of which the external world is displayed in their minds. Their own models reflecting reality

arise in the minds of the addresser and the addressee. This is achieved when the codes formed in their consciousness do not match. However, the ritual does not serve as the same code for the carrier of information, the subject of the transmission and the object, since the ritual becomes a contact-setting tool at the same time. The original meaning of the ritual changes somewhat in the process of contact, since the addressee perceives it realizing his own goal; therefore, a second code is generated. Contact ("a physical channel and psychological connection between speaker and addressee"). A "meaningful contact" is necessary for an adequate understanding of the text, the condition of which is the coincidence of the "semantic foci" of the communicator (sender) and the recipient (addressee).

Message (semelfactive parol, the given discourse, text). A feature of any message is the fact that a person perceives any person, relying, first, on all his previous experience of communication. In the process of communication, the message transforms and acquires a new meaning, depending on the goal, as the second code is entered by the one who perceives the message.

Contex (referent). Context is a prerequisite for communication. It reflects the orientation on the referents that make up the objects of the external world. In a situation of real communication, there is almost always a commonality of the belonging of individuals to certain social groups (in traditional societies it can be more distinct than in modern times). The context can be interpreted as a semiotic field of myth, since the semiosphere, as well as the context, is a necessary condition for communication.

Addressee (decoder, hearer, listener, reader, interpreter). In the act of communication there is a constant detailing of the addressee, which makes the communication process more efficient. In the process of transmitting a myth, the listener is not just present as a perceiving device, but he himself participates in the creation of a myth, passing it through his consciousness, giving the myth his own individual colouring. The text and its reader seek mutual understanding.

Addresser (speaker, encoder, emitter, poet, author, narrator). The producer of mythological texts is a subject that conveys information that is socially important to society. He participates in the process not only as a text producer. In the process of translation, he rebuilds his essence in accordance with the newly emerging codes and depends on the recipient. In the process of a targeted communication act, a socially significant set of codes changes, and, therefore, the essence of the person changes.

Thus, considering the process of translating mythological images and rituals associated with it, it can be argued that this is social communication - a historically established form of sign communication in which textually organized semantic information is transmitted in a special way. In the process of such communication, the personality itself is re-formed, which is a very significant element in human psychology and a factor in the formation of the basis of social and practical activities and social behaviour of human communities.

In this case, the transmitted semiotic image and the associated ritual performed and continues to perform the following functions today, which determine the peculiarities of the existence of myth in the modern communication space. The function of reflection in communication is a form of removing the internal contradictions of the team. Arrangement of the sense of "us" in the archaic and modern world view implies the existence of ideas about the opposite beginning of "them". So, the mythological and ritual "biography" of the genus is a kind of self-portrait of a collective subject on the interested comparison of own and another's. The juxtaposition of "us and them", "ours - others", is more primary

and deeper than "I – you". Thus, the function of reflection in social communications is a way for a person to master the sign structures of a collective.

The function of designation in social communications is also a means for removing the inner division of society. But the mechanism of action is somewhat different. Collective ritual action was the most effective way to establish contact with another world and a means of ensuring the stability of human society from the point of view of the traditional worldview. The ability to symbolize information, use the sign forms of its accumulation, storage and transmission allowed a person to create a system of stable "impersonal" status relationships. The concept of "Me and society" is formed in both modern and traditional societies. The function of the dialogue-conflict. There is another side of social relations in the concept of "society and me", there is another side of social relations. Thus, the dialogue with society is shaped, on the one hand, by the influence of the function, and, on the other hand, by the conflict with the society, where the individual opposes himself to this society in the process of human life activity in social relations. Society, voluntarily or involuntarily, asserts the integrity of a normal person emphasizing the difference of marginals. But at the same time "the emergence of a man beyond himself – a great mystic, genius, or an outstanding personality – inevitably causes social conflict" (Deflem, 1991). Consequently, different groups of people demonstrate their belonging to different social institutions in a different way. Some separate themselves from society, come into a clear conflict with it not seeking to change anything.

Thus, we find patterns in the processes of the existence of myth in the past and present. The unity of the mythological image and ritual determines the way the myth exists in social communications by performing the functions of designation, reflection, dialogue and conflict.

6.3. Research results and discussion

The study of myth today is not the task of considering differences in the newly emerging areas of neomyphology, pseudomyphology, the actualization of myth in popular culture, and so on. A modern man lives in the world, the adaptation to which is hampered by a significant increase in the role of chance, the complexity of relationships. In this regard, interest in the myth in our days has increased, which is determined by its epistemological advantage, reflected in the integrity of the picture of the world that it provides.

Bart (2000) showed the sign nature of cultural "myths". Semiotic studies of the Tartu-Moscow school covered a wide range of social phenomena that were subjected to semiotic analysis because of their ability to function as "modelling systems" that were attached to the knowledge of the relevant semiotic languages (Lotman, 1992). The authors' appeal to the problem of myth as a symbolic structure is associated with the research of E. Cassirer (Cassirer, 1953; Santana & Elizabeth, 2016). In his works, he turned to the critical reconstruction of the ideas of neo-Kantianism and wrote about the revival of theoretical interest in myth and mythic, emphasized its special status, which is endowed with myth in the framework of a symbolic understanding of spiritual forms of consciousness, cognition and culture. In this regard, the revival of interest in the myth is also due to its special function of an intermediary between the rational and the irrational, the unconscious, with all the variety of psychoanalytic connotations. The emergence of integrating metasciences is a distinctive feature of the 21st century. Modern studies of the philosophy of communication are not only associated with critical reflection on a certain subject or

discussions about the role of communication in human existence. Any discussion about communication inevitably becomes communication as such. John Dewey wrote in his book "Experience and Nature" (Godfrey-Smith, 2013): "Of all things, communication is something most amazing". Each concept of communication that is beyond the elementary sender-recipient model, in one way or another, expresses this paradoxical, procedural unity-difference. This understanding reflects the processes of the existence of myth in modern culture and society. To a large extent, the myth attracts the attention of researchers, because it has innumerable interpretations.

German scientist and sociologist Habermas (1998) rethinks the concept of the life world in the paradigm of communicative action and connects the problem of communicativeness with the concept of the mythical (Roman, 2016). He argues that to the extent that the potential of rationality contained in the communicative action, is liberated, the archaic core of the normative, defined by myth, disintegrates and opens the possibility to rationalize the images of the world, universalize law and morality, and accelerate the processes of individualization. Mythological thinking (irrational), along with logical, rational thinking, is the most important factor in the perception of our everyday experience, it is a way of knowledge of the world by man. The daily life of a person is full of emotions, affects, which is characteristic of mythological perception (Habermas, 1998). Mythicity is an attribute of consciousness, its property, so we cannot say that myth is meaningless. On the contrary, myth as a "work in movement" is realized through certain functions in modern communicative reality. These functions make iconic mechanisms the optimal means of translating the mythological image and the ritual associated with it.

7. Conclusion

A new appeal to the myth, or remifologization, arises in a communicative situation of the loss of identity as a search for a way out of a crisis today. The principles of mythological thinking based on a person's ability to understand the world using symbolic forms lie at the heart of building new myths. The essence of this output is either in the sense of peace (static), or the search for such a movement that repeats the previously known states of the system (linear dynamics). The mythological world is inherent in such an understanding of the world, in which there is a combination of individual objects, suggesting its "locus" character.

Today, in communicative strategies, myth becomes a means to find one's own course of action in conditions where the mechanisms of social reality are known in principle but hidden from a person behind a dense network of communications or due to other factors. This is a variant that manifests itself, for example, in media influences: the main means of political influence is not the reasoned speech itself, but a strategy aimed at occupying word meanings and all sorts of semantic manipulations. A net of multi-level communications arising between a multitude of meanings, with an infinite set of modal indicators, is set in the process of social communication. The myth therefore often becomes a mechanism for "seizing the idea", based on which a person can create a new socio-cultural reality out of the chaotic strata of signs.

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