

**MYTHOPOETICS OF THE CULTURE:  
THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ISSUE**

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**Abstract:** *The actuality of the research proposed is the following one. At first, it tends to focus on the theoretical understanding of ethical and aesthetical norms (in broader terms – social norms), to reveal the patterns of their functionality. Secondly, it enables to define constituent principles, which were formed at the “axial time” of genesis of different civilizations. Thirdly, there appeared an opportunity for empirical analysis of their self-realization in everyday life, a contemporary one in particular. Fourthly, it provides a possibility to demonstrate how a civilization is unwrapped in history. It means how its values system is recorded not only in physical artifacts but also in non-material forms, what is not of less importance. The goal of the research presented is to expand the sphere of mythopoetics application in culture, which is considered as text. Such an approach has a heuristic and pragmatic perspective. It allows to “read” the text of culture, that means to decode its symbolic forms. There in the form of mythology, in a convolute form, the world is represented in a completely meaningful way. In practice it is represented in ideology. Politics uses the mythology of human consciousness to promote ideology, which, in this sense, works in everyday life as a social technology.*

**Keywords:** philosophy, worldview, mythological thinking, literary criticism, ethic and aesthetic.

As a rule, ordinary consciousness refers mythological thinking to gray-haired antiquity, to the beginnings of human history. It is correct to a certain degree. Henceforth, the mankind worked out other forms of world conscious understanding: religion, art, literature, and science<sup>1</sup>. However, it is of great importance to note that these new forms could not eliminate mythological thinking. We consider that it is impossible to do that in principle and it is peculiar to a modern human being in the same level of necessity as to a primitive human one. If we attempted to constitute our life activity in the frame of one of mentioned above conscious forms we would reveal that it is practically impossible. They are complementary and they can as well be mutually contradictory. Only mythological comprehension of the world allows to overcome interpretative multiplicity. Our constantly “switched on” capability to build the world in our consciousness on the mythological basis provides the opportunity to draw up all the line of life activity: world perception – world

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<sup>1</sup> T.V. Portnova, “Principles and opportunities of the study of pictorial heritage in the practice of choreographic education”, in *Journal of Siberian Federal University – Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2018, vol. 11, no. 12, p. 2043-2055.

comprehension – world understanding – worldview. What is more, it is performed not only in non-contradictory way but also in holistic one.

The actuality of the research proposed is the following one. At first, it tends to focus on the theoretical understanding of ethical and aesthetical norms (in broader terms – social norms), to reveal the patterns of their functionality. Secondly, it enables to define constituent principles, which were formed at the “axial time” of genesis of different civilizations. Thirdly, there appeared an opportunity for empirical analysis of their self-realization in everyday life, a contemporary one in particular. Fourthly, it provides a possibility to demonstrate how a civilization is unwrapped in history<sup>2</sup>. It means how its values system is recorded not only in physical artifacts but also in non-material forms, what is not of less importance.

Social practice testifies that consciousness manipulating occurs most effectively through the effect on in-depths meanings – the archetypes of consciousness, which constitute the content of collective unconsciousness. Market managers, political strategists, and ideologists considerably use it. The mythopoetics research allows comprehending the logic of manipulating of consciousness and correcting it. The poetics of this kind takes its roots from the mythology as an archetypical attempt of the world building. The poetics in its academic and broad sense is considered as a part of general aesthetics. We, in our turn, see in it the logic of aesthetic and ethical system of a specific civilization. Therefore, our approach carries out methodological expansion, outlined by the framework of practical philosophy. The mythopoetics in our research will be both the procedure of study of the logic of genesis and being of reality. The theoretical set of techniques – mythopoetics is selected non-incidentally. The philosophical understanding of ethic and aesthetic in a social myth has a rather pragmatical aim. We will try to reveal the mechanism of mythology and ideology interaction. While analysing and applying mythopoetics to history and contemporaneity as text, we disclose research perspectives. We also open the opportunity to understand new mythologemes construction or the modernization of old ones’ as the response to actual challenges of the epoch of Postmodern<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> T.V. Portnova, “Historical aspects of project technologies development and opportunities for their use in scenic arts”, in *Space and Culture, India*, 2018, vol. 6, no. 4, p. 48-56.

<sup>3</sup> O. Maltseva, “Dialogue between fashion and laughter: modern and postmodern correlations”, in *S&bid*, 2016, vol. 2, no. 142, p. 79-87. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.21847/1728-9343.2016.2\(142\).70577](http://dx.doi.org/10.21847/1728-9343.2016.2(142).70577)

## **The concept of myth and mythologization in modern realities**

In the scope of literary criticism mythopoetics is viewed as a part of poetics which studies mythological structures of the composition, a mythologeme presentation as a universal plot and/or an image. Actually, the term “mythopoetics” in itself has a dual interpretation. On the one hand, it is the research object nomination of the archetypical and the symbolic in the work and its constituents (a composition, a plot, and images). On the other hand, it is a method of literary analysis, which is aimed at the phenomena study. We will adhere to the dual interpretation of mythopoetics, we will seek to raise its status up to methodology that is a principal approach to the study of mythopoetical model, and the view of the world reconstructed in culture. It is evident that we ought to examine all the “elemental/elementary basis” of culture: archetypes, a cultural code, symbols, mythologemes and so on.

Being considered separately mythologemes are not able to explain how mythoconsciousness constructs the mythical view of the world, forms the worldview by them. The fact that the latter is mythological in its basis is proved by the principal incompleteness of any formal consistent system (according Gödel's incompleteness theorems). The facts that from the point of view of the non-mythological consciousness is different, dismembered will be compared in myth and they appear as a variant (isomorphism) of a unity event, character or text<sup>4</sup>. Such a conclusion of literary criticism obtains a methodological nature and may have a broad application in culture understood as text.

It must be stressed that we consider culture as text that is a system of symbolic forms reflecting the world in the mythology as a holistic view of the world. “From the point of view of culture study, there are only those messages which are textual. The rest ones are considered as if they did not exist and scholars did not take them into account. We can say in this respect that culture is an entity of texts or the text constructed in a complicated manner”<sup>5</sup>. Culture introduces a conscious organization into

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<sup>4</sup> Y.M. Lotman, Z.G. Mints, E.M. Meletinskii, “Literature and myths”, in *Myths of the World: Encyclopedia*, Nauka, Moscow, 1980, pp. 220-226.

<sup>5</sup> O.A. Gabrielyan, “Creating a myth in socio-cultural context of politics”, in *The Scientific Notes of Taurida National University. Political Science*, 2001, vol. 14, no. 63, p. 16-24.

the world that surrounds a human being<sup>6,7</sup>. Through symbolic forms it fixes its meanings, and also it embraces and grasps the semantic field in mythology. In this way is the text of culture formed. Actually, humane culture starts from the very point when the consciousness ability to symbolizing, coding, and decoding in the language of culture, in its texts appears.

Primarily, the text of culture is mythological. Now it is more varied than it was at the beginning of civilization. It can be religious, artistic, and scientific one. But it does not mean that the mythologicality is entirely vanished in the contemporary culture. We assert that it is saved as a fundamental feature and need of human consciousness to comprehend, understand, and construct the human behavior in the modern world. "In fact myth is the most real and the fullest comprehension of reality"<sup>8</sup>. The logic of myth differs from empirical experience and pragmatics. For this logic, there is no border of the natural and the supernatural, the objective and the subjective. Cause-and-consequence links are substituted by relationships based on analogue association. "The dialectical structure of myth is a structure of its meaning. Myth has a multitude of meanings. The revelation of its multitude does appear to be the logic of its meaning. I share the opinion that very rational creative power – Imagination, Imaginatsia which was creating myth acts in us even by now constantly, especially it is peculiar to a poet and a philosopher but in a more veiled form. Until the imagination has extinguished, until then there is and will be the logic of the miraculous. One can delete it only with the truth"<sup>9</sup>. We can add that the highlighted ability is inherent in any person to some extent as it defines its natural essence. Undoubtedly, a poet, a philosopher, and a scientist possess it in a more developed way than an ordinary person does. James George Frazer was one of the first who introduces the concept "mythologeme" in the scientific sphere<sup>10</sup>. In the "Philosophy of Symbolic Forms" Ernst Cassirer described symbolization as a specific

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<sup>6</sup> V. Kulikov, K. Iklassova, A. Kazanbayeva, "Entropy based decision making method in managing the development of a socioinformational system", in *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology*, 2020, vol. 98, no. 1, p. 92-102.

<sup>7</sup> A.S. Kazanbayeva, K.E. Iklassova, V.P. Kulikov, "Development of a method for assessing learning outcomes through automated testing management", in *Periodico The Quimica*, 2019, vol. 16, no. 33, p. 784-800.

<sup>8</sup> A.F. Losev, *The philosophy of name*, Nauka, Moscow, 1990. Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "L'androgynisme chez Platon et Mircea Eliade," in *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), Special Issue, p. 1031.

<sup>9</sup> Y.E. Gholosovker, *The logic of myth*, Nauka, Moscow, 1987.

<sup>10</sup> J.G. Frazer, *The golden bough: a study in magic and religion*, Cosimo Inc., New York, 2009.

feature of mythological thinking<sup>11</sup>. Claude Levi-Strauss wrote about the myth issue as a metalanguage. It is difficult to overestimate the theory of archetypes proposed by Carl Gustav Jung<sup>12</sup>. Domestic scholars paid their attention mainly to the sphere of mythopoetics, the exposure of mythological structures in folklore and purely poetic texts. We are going to continue this tradition, but expanding the subject area to culture as a whole, understood it as a text and a system of symbolic forms.

“Remythologization” in the western literature and culture makes the myth issue particularly actual both in general and in reference to poetics. Obviously, it is necessary to relate the classical forms of myth to the historic reality that gives its birth, especially to refer the mythologism of the 20th century to the social situation of that century, and to discover those differences between the primitive myth and modern mythologizing. However, it is insufficient as the newest interpretations of myth highlight a myth (and a ritual) as some capacious form or a structure, which is able to embody the most fundamental features of human thinking and social behavior, and also art practices.

Therefore, analysis of the structure of the myth is necessary. Since the original interaction of ethnology and literature began, it is necessary to deepen the understanding of the myth within the framework of this interaction”<sup>13</sup>. What is important in Meletinskii’s statement? He did not only stress the importance of the issue and its historically conditioned character, but he also indicated the way where one can await new discoveries. It is evident that the pointed issue did not even lose the topicality in the 21st century but the practical need has been aroused in it. It consists of the need for a theory that could answer the completely pragmatic issues of information wars, state ideological construction and the extremely popular patriotic education of a citizen. “Political mythology is one of the aspects of mythological revival”<sup>14</sup>. The noted remythologization was accomplished in “philosophy of life” of F.W.

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<sup>11</sup> E. Cassirer, *Philosophy of symbolic forms*, Yale University Press, London, 1980. Sorin Purec, „Knowledge of Nature in the Thought of the Enlightenment,” in *Astra Salvensis*, VIII (2020), no. 15, p. 57.

<sup>12</sup> C.G. Jung, *Psychology of the unconscious*, Dover Publications Value Editions, Mineola, 2003. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "L'androgynisme chez Platon et Mircea Eliade," in *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), Special Issue, p. 1031.

<sup>13</sup> E.M. Meletinskii, *Poetics of myth*, Vostochnaya Literatura, Moscow, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, 2006.

Nietzsche<sup>15,16</sup> and H.L. Bergson<sup>17</sup>, in “morphology of culture” by O. Spengler<sup>18</sup>, in existentialism of A. Camus<sup>19</sup> and M. Heidegger<sup>20</sup>, in revolutionary mythology of anarcho-syndicalism of G.E. Sorel<sup>21</sup>. It obtains a new impulse in the works of E. Cassirer and T. Mann<sup>22</sup>. Even M. Eliade did not hold his ground and made an attempt to interpret contemporary socialism as a new eschatological myth<sup>23</sup>. The list of scholars can be continued. The first explains how the myth turns history into an ideology and believes that modernity is mythologized. The myth does not disappear with its rational deconstruction, but again and again is engendered by social psychology<sup>24,25</sup>.

A half of the century later, we could ascertain that the mentioned authors were correct in their statements. Moreover, we have entered the historical period when social technologies became so advanced that mythologization of political process became an artificially fulfilled manipulating technology through which one creates supplemented reality and incorporates respective myths into humane consciousness. Using these technologies, as part of aggressive political technology, unwanted regimes are replaced. The state loses its citizens, as it turned out to be unprepared for the “soft power” of new social technologies. Its sovereignty turns out to be in risk. One might not grieve for it if the culture itself, its originality did not find itself in danger of disappearance. Modern

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<sup>15</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Will to power paperback*, Vintage, New York, 1968.

<sup>16</sup> K. Nurgali, K. Assanov, G. Shashkina, M. Zhumabekov, F. Kultursynova, “The concept of dionysism in the legacy of Friedrich Nietzsche and Vyacheslav Ivanov”, in *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 2018, vol. 14, no. 2, p. 99-108.

<sup>17</sup> H. Bergson, *The two sources of morality and religion Notre Dame*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 1977.

<sup>18</sup> O. Spengler, *The decline of the West*, Oxford UP, New York, 1991.

<sup>19</sup> A. Camus, *The myth of Sisyphus and other essays*, Knopf, New York, 1955. Sorin Purec, „Knowledge of Nature in the Thought of the Enlightenment,” in *Astra Salvensis*, VIII (2020), no. 15, p. 57.

<sup>20</sup> M. Heidegger, *Being and time*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1996.

<sup>21</sup> I.L. Horowitz, *From Georges Sorel: essays in socialism and philosophy*, Oxford UP, New York, 1976.

<sup>22</sup> T. Mann, *Culture and socialism, past masters and other papers*, Books for Libraries Press, New York, 1968. Sorin Purec, „Knowledge of Nature in the Thought of the Enlightenment,” in *Astra Salvensis*, VIII (2020), no. 15, p. 57.

<sup>23</sup> M. Eliade, *Myth and reality*, Harper & Row, New York, 1963.

<sup>24</sup> K.R. Nurgali, “Representation of ancient times in Kazakh historical novel”, in *Life Science Journal*, 2013, vol. 10, no. 11, p. 298-301.

<sup>25</sup> K.R. Nurgali, K.M. Baytanasova, J.K. Kishkenbaeva, “Author's role in the literary field by the example of Kazakh literature”, in *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 2013, vol. 25, no. 9, p. 1290-1294.

successes of socio-humanitarian technologies, through which state regimes change, the geopolitical picture of the world is being transformed, and its redesign is carried out. It is said that social philosophy should pay close attention to these questions. At the same time, a range of questions is aroused. We suggest that the issue of ideology is key one among them. The statement of ideology death appears to be premature. Ideology as a system of definite values always presents in any society. We are the witnesses how it is utilized by “soft power” whose usage is checked to be rather rigid, especially in results.

### **Features of the logic of the interaction of mythology and ideology**

We will try to reveal the logic of interaction of mythology and ideology. The mechanism of interaction becomes mythopoetics in its broader sense. In the consciousness of a modern human being, other forms of the world comprehension press a myth out. But we assert, nevertheless, it can be eliminated totally and finally. Myth as a story about the world and place of man in it, in fact, is an explanatory model of the world, that is, an intelligent and miraculous world-building, creative worldview, continues its otherness in ideology as a technology of the political process practically inseparable from social life. Ideology is the technology of mythology, the process of bringing it as a final product to the consumer. A mythologeme is fundamental as a plot of the myth through which the archetype shines, while ideology is the final product of the political process ready for consumption. That is why, a myth and a mythologeme are ontological, and an ideology and an ideologeme are technological. Ideology is a real mechanism of myth realization in social life. Ideology as mythology exists fairly as a controller of human behavior and regulates everyday life as an image of desirable present and future. There are no right or wrong ideologies. They compete with each other, as they propose a project for the arrangement of society. An ideology that achieves social development through consent, and not violence, even legitimate, is effective.

Otherwise, it is not far more important how ideology makes the accents in the daily routine, everyday life what to read, to watch, and to consume in the whole, than how it constructs the surrounding world for us, than how many people it “puts into” social niches and distributes the roles. In addition, these humans participate actively and independently. Anyway, a contemporary state has various tools to influence on citizens except rude coercive power. It effects ideologically, involves an individual

into an interactive game making him a participator of the process, a co-author of the ideology, its ethics and aesthetics<sup>26</sup>. This is the strength and the peculiarity of ideology. What was the art if it was immediately, almost spontaneously, articulated with politics? Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe asks this question in his article “Poetics and Politics”<sup>27</sup>. Here one can remind “The State” by Plato with his mythopoesis. Here new horizons for mythopoetics are opened which leaves the frame of literature. It is already interested in the “projection” of the myth on political reality as an ideological text.

Mythopoetics is an artistic, creatively formed system based on a motivated appeal to the poetics of myth and its models, and at the same time, it is a method of studying them. Ideology is impossible without composition, plot, image, without myth and mythology. It is based on them. Moreover, mythopoetics needs own ethics and aesthetics. Only in this case it can be successful, inspiring, at least at the initial stage of its birth and a mature triumph. The archetypical and the symbolic enlighten great perspectives for it, and a myth as collection of private and disjointed into a whole give for ideology a serious ontological ground. Mythopoetics reflects the specific type of thinking. It, this mythological thinking, utilizes a repository of mythologemes, archetypes. In this repository it discovers the tools for world explanation, world understanding and world construction. He inspires technological process of ideologization on the level of an individual and it becomes meaningful for his values. So, the ideologically received creative potential attains valid quality and is aestheticized. Ideology manages to reach the highest level – the sense of life and incorporates into the lowest, everyday life level of behavior. That is why, ideology can be considered as a universal anthropological aspect of contemporary society life, but not as an erroneous form of social consciousness.

The above mentioned is important because ordinary consciousness does not deepen into the peculiarities of myth and ideology correlation. It is uncritical as it is mythological and is under ideological pressure and co-participation. It is important for it to possess pragmatics of easy explanatory schemes and rituals in the practice of everyday life. But one who has reflected on the possibilities of social bodies manipulation realizes the perspectives of such inquiries. A person is governed by existential truth which speaks to him/her how to act, what to do, how to fulfill

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<sup>26</sup> T. Portnova, “Genre and style interaction in solutions staged ballets of the nineteenth, twentieth centuries”, in *Astra Salvensis*, 2018, vol. 6, no. 12, p. 689-694.

<sup>27</sup> P. Lacoue-Labarthe, *Poetics and politics*, Aleteya, St. Petersburg, 1999.



his/her choice which is crucially significant for their life activity. None of these questions has an objective answer. All of them carry the mythological sign. A human being lives in a myth and with it and that is the first reason why myth is real, and mythical phenomena are differentiated only by their being-tensity. Practically the same can be said about ideology.

Existentialization (living ethics of behavior and reflection), rationalization (comprehension) and aesthetization (imagination) of ideology are saved in our postmodern epoch as well. Its role in personal identification was not diminished but it became more evident. However, there have also been fundamental changes, why our era is called Postmodern. In order to finish theoretical excursion into the philosophy of myth, one should also note the thesis about the fundamental unity of the logic of myth with the logic of modern thinking. Such a point of view we can see in the works of Claude Levi-Strauss, a classic of social anthropology. He sees the difference between primitive and modern thinking not in the underdevelopment of the first, not in the forms and principles of thinking, but in the fact that different basis are taken for logical inference: "In the same way we may be able to show that the same logical processes operate in myth as in science, and that man has always been thinking equally well; the improvement lies, not in an alleged progress of man's mind, but in the discovery of new areas to which it may apply its unchanged and unchanging powers"<sup>28</sup>. Not lessening the role of the intelligence of modern man, nevertheless, we can assert that it functions the same as intelligence of primitive man, while creating a myth, i.e. violating and avoiding the laws of formal logic. He does not notice the logical contradictions, admits the violation of the law of the excluded third, freely manipulates the cause and consequence, possibility and reality. The principle of participation, emotional unity is for him more important than the truth or the rules of logic by which it is achieved. The logic of myth is based on the imagination, on the imaginative ability of consciousness. From the height of the achievements of our minds, we sometimes snobbishly dismiss this ability as not the main, childish one. But why does one feel need in mythology and ideology, why does one create them constantly? The answer can be found in R. Barthes' "Mythology". He thinks that this is fear in the face of a torn world<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> C. Levi-Strauss, *Structural anthropology*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1963.

<sup>29</sup> B. Roland, *Mythologies*, The Noonday Press, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, 1972.

The present is created by myth in the politics and it is proposed to people in the shape of ideological utopia<sup>30</sup>, i.e. the place which is not existed but everyone ought to strive. An ideology proposes an individual and the society an optimal model (for official authorities) of individual behavior, guide to action for a mass subject of social activity. If politicians do it in accordance with the mentality of a nation, their expectations of the domestic political stability are reached by it; the fear of social chaos is overpassed. The myth explains in equal measure the past, the present, and the future. Nothing reminiscent of mythology like political ideology. Perhaps, in our modern society, the latter simply replaced the first<sup>31</sup>. An ideology is a real mechanism of myth carrying into social life. It is not “good” or “bad”, it is a real process.

The point is that an ideology is not eliminated in principle. It is a part of the reality. One can discard an ideology but a new one will replace it. Its main function in the society, in our opinion, rests upon the idea that an ideology civilizes society being based on mythology, using its potential. This thesis as many other methodological statements made above requires its revelation in the practice of social being. Only through such a decoding is formed their evidence base, speculation of reasoning is filled with the “blood” of the life of the historical process. Ideology takes root in society only when it dissolves in everyday life, it grows into it. Everyday life is not built on some preconceived plan. It lives and settles simultaneously. At the same time, a continuous reflection takes place which leads from world creation to world comprehension and world understanding, and then to worldview. And it is of no importance whether it occurs consciously or unconsciously. It is more important that the process itself takes place. An individual “assembles” into a personality. Autopoiesis is a reflective form of such an anthropological synthesis. It is a creative process of self-production by a person of himself in the daily routine in everyday life.

It is significant for us that autopoiesis enters into a semantic resonance with mythopoesis. The production of subjectivity which is expressed in poetry so evidently makes ordinary consciousness mythological, in the one hand, and gives the opportunity to aestheticize ideology, in the other hand. Both processes humanize the daily routine and ideology introduced in everyday life by politics. It is evident that above-pointed methodological clarifications are heuristic and gives the perspective to new researches in the sphere of mythopoetics of culture.

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<sup>30</sup> D. Pylypenko, “Utopia in the world political-legal theory and practice”, in *Utopia y Praxis Latinoamericana*, 2018, vol. 23, no. 82, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> C. Levi-Strauss, *Structural anthropology*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1963.

