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IN THE PROJECTION OF TWO CULTURES: MYTHOLOGISM AS THE FOUNDATION OF W. WHITMAN'S AND B.-I. ANTONYCH'S ARTISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS

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This article is devoted to the mythopoetic consciousness of Walt Whitman and B.-I. Antonych, emphasizing their unique approach to national and religious themes in folk life. Both poets drew inspiration from the ancient faith of their ancestors, considering it the wellspring of their creativity. Archetypes, symbols, motifs, and images from the archetypal memory served as carriers of socio-cultural, historical, and archetypal memory, reflecting the essence of their respective cultures. W. Whitman and B.-I. Antonych became advocates for national self-awareness, emphasizing the potential loss of millennia-old cultures if these values were neglected.

The author challenges the perception of myth as exclusively linked to archaic thinking, asserting its continued presence in contemporary culture. Myth is portrayed as a distinct form of worldview, deeply embedded in human consciousness, with examples ranging from political ideologies to advertising.

So the work explores the intricate interaction between literature and myth, emphasizing the dual nature of folklore as a cultural intermediary. The author argues for the systematic study of mythological motifs in contemporary culture, considering their widespread presence and impact.

Solar archetypal images and symbols, particularly the Sun, are highlighted in W. Whitman's and B.-I. Antonych's works. The poets attribute profound significance to these symbols, viewing them as life-giving forces and symbolic embodiments of the divine. The synthesis of mythopoetic elements in their works reflects a deep connection to primal beliefs and mythological consciousness.

Overall, the article is devoted to the exploring the poets' mythopoetic consciousness, emphasizing their use of archetypes and symbols to shape cultural narratives and values. It underscores the enduring relevance of myth in contemporary culture and literature, portraying it as a dynamic force shaping the collective psyche across time.

Key words: *myth, mythopoetic consciousness, mythopoetic elements, symbols, contemporary culture, archetypal memory, national self-awareness.*

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У ПРОЄКЦІЇ ДВОХ КУЛЬТУР: МІФОЛОГІЗМ ЯК ОСНОВА ХУДОЖНЬОЇ СВІДОМОСТІ ВОЛТА ВІТМЕНА ТА БОГДАНА-ІГОРЯ АНТОНИЧА

Стаття присвячена дослідженню міфопоетичної свідомості Волта Вітмена та Б.-І. Антонича, їхньому унікальному підходу до національних і релігійних тем життя людства. Обидва поети

черпали натхнення з давньої віри своїх предків, розглядаючи її джерелом своєї творчості. Архетипи, символи, мотиви й образи з архетипної пам'яті слугували не лише носіями соціокультурної, історичної та архетипної пам'яті, але й відображали сутність їхніх культур. В. Вітмен та Б.-І. Антонич стали «передавачами» національної самосвідомості, акцентуючи увагу на потенційній втраті тисячолітніх культур, якщо останні будуть знехтувані.

Авторка наголошує на уявленні про міф як виключно пов'язаному з архаїчним мисленням, стверджуючи його постійну присутність у сучасній культурі. Міф виступає як окрема форма світогляду, глибоко врізана в людську свідомість, тому авторка і досліджує взаємодію літератури та міфу, підкреслюючи двозначну природу фольклору як культурного посередника. Систематичне вивчення й аналіз міфологічних мотивів у сучасній культурі з урахуванням їх постійної присутності та впливу й обумовлює актуальність дослідження.

Міфологізм українського й американського поетів у статті розглянуті саме через міфологічні образи, якими рясніє їхня творчість. Зокрема, сонячні архетипні образи та символи, особливо Сонце, виокремлюються у творах В. Вітмена та Б.-І. Антонича. Поети надають цим символам глибокий смисл, розглядаючи їх як життєдайну силу та символічне втілення божественного. Синтез міфопоетичних елементів у їхніх творах відображає глибоке поєднання з первісними віруваннями та міфологічною свідомістю.

Таким чином, стаття присвячена дослідженню міфопоетичної свідомості поетів, підкреслено використання поетами архетипів і символів для формування культурних наративів та цінностей. Дослідження акцентує увагу на вічній актуальності міфу в сучасній культурі та літературі, зображаючи його як динамічну силу, що формує колективну свідомість протягом усього періоду існування людства.

Ключові слова: міф, міфопоетична свідомість, міфопоетичні елементи, символи, сучасна культура, архетипна пам'ять, національна самосвідомість.

W. Whitman's and B.-I. Antonych's creativity fundamentally differs from that of their contemporaries in that they were primarily interested in the national and religious subtext of folk life. They saw the foundation of this life in the ancient faith of their ancestors, in the mythological groundwork, which became the source of creativity for both poets. The "eternal" archetypes, symbols, motifs, images, and plots, which form the basis of the archetypal memory, were constantly referred by W. Whitman and B.-I. Antonych becoming an inexhaustible material for them. These elements serve as carriers of socio-cultural, historical, and archetypal memory, reflecting not only the character but also the soul of the people, their internal life, and inner world in unity and integrity.

In their view, the loss of these values could lead to the loss of the entire millennia-old culture, traditions, and beliefs of entire nations. In the advancement of national consciousness, W. Whitman and B.-I. Antonych became unique spokespersons, calling and leading towards national self-awareness, self-assertion, and revival.

Therefore, in the poetic explorations of these poets, the mythological and archetypal dimension of the spiritual culture of humanity acquires crucial significance, as aptly expressed by N. Radionova, where the "initiative strength of the past" [1] is concealed. Seeking to optimally and comprehensively utilize their own philosophical positions and national culture, W. Whitman and B.-I. Antonych turned to the spiritual and "historical heritage, finding fertile intuitions there. The understanding and interpretation of these intuitions in their contemporary contexts revealed new problematic aspects of the thematic field, such as the existence of human beings in the complex structures of their life experience." [1].

Comparing cross-national literary (artistic) traditions, which serve as the main representatives of national consciousness and mentality, allows for the separation of the common from the unique

and the explanation of certain motives understood only in the context of the general features of mythopoetics. The example is the key image of the Afterworld: juxtaposing its national versions helps, on the one hand, to uncover new layers of meaning in specific traditions. For instance, the essence of the images of forgotten horned deities in Celtic and proto-Indian traditions can be revealed solely based on their iconography. On the other hand, unique ethnonational characteristics enrich the literary picture of mythopoetic creation, allowing conclusions to be drawn regarding its similarities and differences with the artistic creativity of the contemporary, authorial type.

Mythopoetic mentality differs not by rational-logical but by imaginative-emotional, evaluative, meaningful, and aesthetic characteristics. Perhaps its most vivid attribute is the phenomenon of “mystical participation” or “participation”: a belief in non-reducible connections between various objects that go beyond cause-and-effect relationships. Its prerequisite is the conception of the unity of visible and invisible (primary and defining in relation to everyday existence) reality. These aesthetically rooted notions, ingrained in the collective unconscious, still frequently manifest themselves in literature. Unlike scientific worldviews, both mythopoetic and artistic perspectives rely on imaginative thinking, fantasy, intuition, and archetypes. Therefore, it becomes necessary to delve into the irrational or non-rational sphere of human psyche.

Contemporary literary studies delve into the expanded artistic significance of the archetype, archetypal image, myth, and mythopoetics through their connection with art. The convergence of art and myth is justified by the numerous genetic and homological links. The irrational and transcendent archetype cannot be directly presented in cultural artifacts. It manifests itself in the archetypal image, which, in addition to unchanging aesthetic attributes, possesses noticeable individual characteristics. This combination of timeless meaning and a myriad of contemporary interpretations creates an extraordinary “stereoscopic” effect. Archetypal images in literary art often have mythological origins. Myths, which have traditionally provided value coordinates for worldviews and presented behavioral models, have always been and remained a kind of repository of ideas.

If an artist manages to reveal the numinous content embedded in the “eternal” image, the archetype works on the author, elevating their works from the incidental to the necessary, from the individual to the universal, from the transient to the eternal, making them classical, i.e., relevant for any era. Thus, archetypal symbolism allows us to consider mythological and mythologized historical poetics as primary sources for studying ethno-psychology, the history of humans and collective psyche.

However, according to the majority of contemporary researchers, myth should not be exclusively linked to archaic, primitive, or pre-logical thinking. Numerous mythological concepts persist in the consciousness of modern individuals, continually reactualizing in various forms of socio-cultural life. Examples include the social mythology of fascism, communism, and other political ideologies, as well as the mythology of advertising, which cultivates unconscious impulses and appeals to ancient archetypes. Therefore, myth is considered a distinct form of worldview, equivalent to the entire spiritual culture, rather than a separate genre or even a kind of artistic creation. Myth-making is seen as an eternal, organic characteristic of the human spirit, rather than a recently surpassed early stage in its historical development.

Summarizing numerous observations by scholars on the “poetics of myth”, we can identify the following main features of mythic thinking: syncretism (the undivided nature of image and concept, a sense of the interpenetration of all existence, the organic unity of humans and nature, an inseparable connection between the real and the unreal, the natural and the supernatural, the world of the living and the world of the dead), a preference for associative thinking, symbolism (the

multivalence and depth of mythological archetypal images, their inherent reference to another, transcendent reality), etiology (an attempt to explain the origin of all things and phenomena, to reach their ultimate cause), fantasy (the presence of the miraculous, magical, supernatural), a unique character of the mythological chronotope that extends beyond the everyday: mythological time is an infinite cosmic cycle from the “golden age” to the “end of the world”, where the fused past, present, and future involve eternal return to primordial times of creation and sacred events; mythological space is demarcated into the “own” and “other” worlds horizontally and the “upper” (heavenly), “middle” (earthly and aquatic), and “lower” (underworld) worlds vertically.

Literary art, genetically linked to archetypal memory and myth, constantly interacts with them: in parallel with the gradual demythologization due to the secularization of aesthetic consciousness, increasingly distancing itself from archaic beliefs and notions, it simultaneously undergoes processes of remythologization (the revival of ancient myths in new forms).

“The constant interaction between literature and myths occurs directly, in the form of the ‘transfusion’ of myth into literature, and indirectly, through visual arts, rituals, folk celebrations, religious mysteries, and in the last centuries – through scientific concepts of mythology, aesthetic and philosophical doctrines, and folklore.” [Quoted from 2, 15]. It is worth noting that mythology is rarely directly perceived in literary texts: mythic images are only occasionally borrowed directly from sacred pretexts. More often, the “channel of communication”, the communicative “bridge” between myth and literature, is the archetypal memory of past generations, an expression of which can be called folklore – oral folk creativity, in which a multitude of relic mythological images are preserved in a partially secularized and accordingly transformed form by folk poetic imagination. So most literary scholars are unanimous in their opinions that folk poetry, in terms of consciousness, tends towards the world of mythology. However, as an artistic phenomenon, it aligns with literature. The dual nature of folklore makes it a cultural intermediary in this regard, and scientific concepts of folklore, becoming a cultural fact, have a significant impact on the interaction between literature and myths.

Therefore, the presence of mythological motifs in contemporary culture is a widespread and systematic phenomenon that deserves detailed study. It is associated with the creation of a coherent picture of a value-laden, human world, a rejection of the hypertrophy of rationalism, the formation of an aesthetically sensitive perception of the world enriched by the experience of world and national culture, and art (especially poetry).

Hence, it is not surprising that one of the central literary concepts of the 20th century is mythopoeia, based on two components – the Greek *mythos* (word, narrative) and *poietike* (the art of creation). Considering the simple fact that a myth is one type of discourse, in our case, within the system of mythology, which, in turn, is a cultural crystallization of narratives (mythems), i.e., its disassembled and recombined fragments, and poetics, dealing with purely normative questions, occupied with specific literary segments (composition, versification, etc.), we come to the conclusion that, by operating with the concept of mythopoeia, we are dealing with a specific art. An art that allows the creation of mythological structures (works) and meanings of such strength that even due to the transformation and intertextual interference (demythologization) of the original narrative, the cultural foundation of the mythic text would preserve its primary orientation. In other words, it would confirm the “liveliness” of the myth as a carrier of semantic and value core that is resistant to decay, invariably linked to meaning creation.

The art of creating myth occurs through two paths: on the one hand, through amplification (enlargement) and imaginary deformation of real history, transforming the narrative content into a meta-historical register, and on the other hand, through the transformation of ideal content into a narrative structure.

Thus, we turn to mythological meta language, a kind of secret language, the language of tradition that describes the mythological essence of the archaic worldview of humans, which, in turn, originates from primitive myth-making, much like how mythological narratives trace genealogical steps to the primal foundation.

In B.-I. Antonych's and W. Whitman's works, mythopoetic consciousness emerges as one of the central concepts in their creativity, which is crucial for these poets, "since the attitude towards the past appears in them as an 'organizing' moment of moral and philosophical principles. Memory integrates everything, determines the true value of everything; everything enters the orbit of memory, up to life and death." [3, 159]. The main task of the poets in their poetry was not in reflecting the shifts of socio-political nature – the object of their poetic vision was a coordinate system that can be called the retro-memory of humanity and the Universe.

For W. Whitman and B.-I. Antonych the problem of preserving the mythopoetic memory of the people arose as a conscious continuation of the uninterrupted duration of human life, conscious activity, which is a condition for the further harmonious existence of all humanity.

Thus, a characteristic feature of the poets' creativity is cyclicity, which they professed on practically every page of their poetry. W. Whitman and B.-I. Antonych emphasized that, according to the beliefs of ancestors, a person originates from plants (animals) and eventually returns to the Earth, later being reborn in the next living being. The Ukrainian lyricist wrote: "Мов папороть, перед очима / Стає прапервісність твоя. / Ти ще рослина, ти ще камінь, / тебе обкручує змія" [4, 107].

The lyrical hero of Walt Whitman becomes the same plant after death being reborn again, "Tenderly will I use you curling grass, / It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men, / It may be you are from old people and from women, / and from offspring taken soon out of their mothers' laps, / And here you are the mothers' laps." [5].

Each blade of grass, according to the American poet, encapsulates the experience of ancestors, the mythological consciousness of forebears, which will guide the correct path for the existence and development of humanity when read and interpreted correctly. Walt Whitman takes on this mission: "O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues! / And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of mouths for nothing. / I wish I could translate the hints about the dead young men and women, / And the hints about old men and mothers, and the offspring taken soon out of their laps." [5].

However, not only the shoots and blades of grass, as Walt Whitman believes, possess age-old knowledge and wisdom, but also trees must be included in this list: "Why are there trees I never walk under but large and melodious / thoughts descend upon me?" [5].

B.-I. Antonych, in turn, offered: "Дивіться, це пожежа світу, буря первнів, / рослини моляться, шаліє кожен колір... / ...Ось димарі землі, ось куряться дерева / в зеленім, золотавім і багровім димі" [6, 164–165].

Using mythological consciousness, Walt Whitman and B.-I. Antonych, through their creativity, successfully went beyond the individual's consciousness, combining in the spatial-temporal dimensions the interindividual and intercultural properties of people and endowing the mythological memory with the common properties of the existence of all humanity.

For example, solar archetypal images and symbols played a crucial role in shaping the mythopoetic consciousness of Walt Whitman and B.-I. Antonych. The Sun, for them, was a life-giving force, a symbolic embodiment of the divine. The poets traced the deep roots of this symbol in the primal beliefs of their ancestors, so the paradigm of the Sun image is considered by us taking into account the influence of mythological consciousness. B.-I. Antonych wrote: "Сприймаю сонце, мов причастя, / Хмільним молінням і стрільчастим. / Хай сонце – прабог всіх релігій – / Золотопере й життєсійне, / Благословить мій дим крилатий" [4, 264].

In the works of the Ukrainian poet, we observe the active presence and a unique interpretation of solar images, motifs, allusions in practically every poem. B.-I. Antonych can be called a “sun worshiper” in general since the poet himself claimed that he is “п’яний дівчак із сонцем у кишени” [2, 81], who “сонцеві життя продавши / за сто червінців божевілля, / захоплений поганин завжди, / поет весняного похмілля” [4, 84], born “під вільхами і сонцем” [4, 185].

V. Vojtovych believes that this is primarily related to the fact that in Ukrainian mythology, the sacralization of the Sun, as in “many agricultural nations, remains particularly noticeable even after the adoption of Christianity, in remnants of pagan beliefs and in various calendar-ritual actions related to the autumn and spring equinoxes and winter and summer solstices.” [7, 495].

Solar symbolism among Ukrainians was represented by bread and round objects, which found vivid reflection in B.-I. Antonych’s poetry (“червоним сонця веретенем / закрутить молоде хлоп’я” [6, 101], “свячене сонце в короваю” [6, 103], “ось ранок синім возом їде / і сонця сніп в село везе” [6, 104], “стіл ясеновий, на столі / слов’янський дзбан, у дзбані сонце” [6, 105]). He addressed the Sun, attributing to it both temporal attributes (“Кружалом сонце покотилось / назустріч місяцеві й тьмі” [6, 93]), thus enhancing the image of the luminary by comparing (“Як ватра, сонце догоріло, / пожаром очі обпекло” [6, 93]), or using it as a complex metaphor (“Сонце з батогом проміння вогняний погонич” [6, 67], “Солом’яні, руді, мутні краски / вже осінь пензлем сонця по городі / розкидує...” [6, 49]). Thus, solar motifs, images, and topos, along with their symbolism rooted in mythology and Christian tradition, successfully synthesizing in B.-I. Antonych’s works (“Ходить сонце у крисані, / спить слов’янське Дитя. / Їдуть сани, плаче Пані, / снігом стелиться життя” [6, 105]), constitute the core of his poetics.

The Sun as the source of life and warmth on earth is a prominent image in of Walt Whitman’s poetic works: “Shine! shine! shine! / Pour down your warmth, great sun! / While we bask, we two together.” [5]. The archetypal image of the Sun in the works of the poet always had a positive emotional expression, emphasizing the beauty and perfection of ordinary people (“The beards of the young men glistened with wet, it ran from their long hair, Little streams passed all over their bodies.” [5]. “The sun falls on his crispy hair and moustache... falls on the black of his polish’d and perfect limbs.” [5]. For the American poet the Sun was the essential attribute of the landscape against which the life of his lyrical hero unfolded.

Walt Whitman often articulated his “cosmic” and “all-encompassing” nature through the image of the Moon: “Speeding with tail’d meteors, throwing fire-balls like the rest, / Carrying the crescent child that carries its own full mother in its belly, / Storming, enjoying, planning, loving, cautioning, / Backing and filling, appearing and disappearing, / I tread day and night such roads.” [5].

Therefore, the solar images of the poets reach the deep memory of ancestors, which, as noted by N. Radionova, is a “kind of airy axis that unites the present with the past” [1], and thanks to this, their creativity acquires integrity and authenticity. Crystallizing through the folk-mythological prism, the leading images-symbols – the Sun and the Moon – in the lyrics of Walt Whitman and B.-I. Antonych elevated from the depths of national consciousness and revived such archetypes that helped society find the right path for development and existence.

Therefore, the peculiarity of mythopoetic thinking in these poets lies in the discovery and transformation of the main mythic elements, which, synthesizing at the textual level, attempted to reveal to humanity the greatest spiritual achievements: understanding the eternal flow of being, the interconnection of all its forms and spheres, deep cognition by the individual of their pre-culture, even their pre-form, awareness that the universe is reflected in everything, even in the smallest thing.

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