

THE ROLE OF MYTHOLOGY AND FAIRY TALES IN TATYANA
TOLSTAYA'S NOVEL "THE SLYNX"

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Annotation. *This paper analyzes the role of mythology and fairy-tale elements in the novel "Kys." The study examines the functioning of mythological and folkloric structures within the post-apocalyptic world depicted by the author, as well as their influence on the development of the work's artistic space and the characters' consciousness.*

Particular attention is paid to the process of transformation of traditional cultural forms: it is revealed that myth and fairy tale in the novel lose their original integrity and semantic content, turning into distorted and fragmented constructs. Phenomena such as the degradation of folklore, the loss of cultural memory, the destruction of archetypal models, and the changing functions of language are analyzed.

The work demonstrates that mythology in the work serves not only a cognitive but also a social function, becoming a tool for shaping and maintaining a certain type of thinking. Fairytale structures are deconstructed, reflecting the crisis of traditional notions of personal development and the path to truth.

The methodological basis of the study is the structural-semantic, intertextual, and cultural approaches. The theoretical foundation is drawn from works in the fields of mythology, folklore studies, and literary theory.

The study concludes that mythological and fairy-tale elements are key to understanding the novel's ideological content, reflecting the processes of cultural degradation and transformation of human consciousness.

Objective of the work:

The purpose of this work is to identify and analyze the role of mythological and folklore elements in the novel Kys, as well as to determine their significance in the formation of the artistic world of the work and the author's concept of man and society.

Object of study:

The object of the study is the text of the novel "Kys" by Tatyana Tolstaya

Subject of research:

The subject of the study is the mythological and fairy-tale motifs, images, structures and archetypes present in the work.

Research methods: *structural-semantic analysis of the text, comparative-typological method, intertextual analysis, cultural approach, elements of mythopoetic analysis.*

Keywords: *mythology, folklore, fairy tale, archetype, post-apocalypse, cultural degradation, mythopoetics, tradition, cultural memory, symbol*

Introduction

The novel "Kys" occupies a special place in contemporary Russian literature, representing a complex work in both plot and style, combining elements of dystopia, post-apocalyptic narrative, satire, and mythological thinking. One of the most important features of the novel's artistic world is its extensive use of mythological and folkloric structures.

Mythology and fairy tales in the text are not merely decorative elements, but a profound foundation for modeling reality. They shape the characters' distinctive consciousness, determine their perception of the world, and serve as a means of expressing the author's position.

Relevance of the study

The relevance of this topic stems from the growing interest in the mechanisms of preserving and transforming cultural memory amidst the current cultural crisis. The novel "The Slynx" demonstrates how myth and fairy tale can function in a degraded society that has lost touch with history and culture, as well as with the progress of humanity as a whole.

Moreover, the analysis of mythological structures allows for a deeper understanding of the philosophical issues of the work, related to questions of identity, memory and human nature.

Main part

The artistic world of the novel "Kys" is constructed at the intersection of post-apocalyptic reality and deep mythological structures. However, the uniqueness of this world lies in the fact that mythology exists here in a distorted, degraded form. It is not a stable system of ideas, as in traditional culture, but a fragmented and chaotic collection of images, fears, and fragments of knowledge. It is through this transformation of myth that the author reveals the crisis of cultural consciousness.

Above all, mythology in the novel serves as an explanation for the surrounding world, but this explanation lacks logic and coherence. Characters encounter phenomena whose origins are incomprehensible to them and attempt to interpret them using primitive concepts. This results in a kind of "secondary mythology," in which fear of the unknown takes on concrete, albeit vague, forms. The most striking example is the image of Kysi—a mysterious creature about which no one has precise knowledge. Descriptions of Kysi vary, cluttered with rumors and speculation, becoming a collective symbol of fear. Unlike traditional myth, where the monster has a specific function and meaning, here it lacks a clear structure and exists as a product of distorted consciousness.

Alongside mythological concepts, fairy tale elements are prominent in the novel. At first glance, the plot structure of the work resembles the classic fairy tale model: the protagonist, Benedict, follows a specific path, faces trials, strives for knowledge, and seemingly moves toward the attainment of truth. However, this model undergoes profound changes. In a traditional fairy tale, the hero's journey is associated with moral growth, overcoming trials, and achieving harmony. In the novel, however, this path proves false: Benedict fails to develop spiritually, his "knowledge" proves superficial and distorted, and the outcome of

his journey brings neither insight nor liberation. Thus, the fairy tale structure is preserved only formally, while its inner essence is destroyed.

The issue of archetypes takes on particular significance. Familiar archetypal images—the hero, the sage, and the monster—can be found in the text, but all are presented in a transformed form. The hero loses his traditional qualities: he possesses neither strength, nor wisdom, nor a desire for truth. The image of the sage is also discredited: the bearers of knowledge either do not understand it themselves or convey it in a distorted form. The monster, represented by Kys, lacks definition and symbolic completeness. This transformation of archetypes testifies to the destruction of universal cultural models and the loss of their meaning.

The central aspect of the analysis is the degradation of folklore. In the novel's world, individual elements of cultural tradition are preserved, but they exist in a distorted form. Characters misrepresent texts, lose the meaning of words, and confuse various cultural layers. Works of literature are perceived not as bearers of meaning, but as collections of sounds or beautiful expressions. Benedikt, rewriting books, is unaware of their content, which transforms the process of rewriting into a mechanical, routine, meaningless act, devoid of cognitive function. Thus, culture ceases to be a means of transmitting experience and becomes an empty form.

The novel's language plays a key role in conveying this process. It is stylized to resemble primitive speech, replete with distortions, neologisms, and archaisms. Language reveals the characters' unique way of thinking—mythological, yet lacking in system. Words lose their semantic content and become idiosyncratic symbols without content. This makes communication difficult, and the process of cognition virtually impossible.

No less important is the social function of mythology. In the absence of genuine knowledge, myth becomes a tool for social control. Fear of the unknown, belief in imaginary beings, and distorted perceptions of the world all contribute to maintaining the existing order. People lacking the ability to think critically find themselves dependent on imposed notions. Thus, mythology serves not only to explain the world but also to control it.

The novel's intertextuality also reveals a deep connection to folklore and literary tradition. The text contains references to Russian folk tales, myths, and classical literature. However, all these elements are presented in a distorted form, highlighting the break in cultural continuity. Tradition does not disappear entirely, but it loses its integrity and semantic richness.

Taken together, all of these aspects suggest that mythology and fairy tale in Kys' novel function as a kind of mirror reflecting the state of society. Through their transformation, the author depicts the process of cultural destruction, the loss of memory, and the degradation of human consciousness. Deprived of their original function, myth and fairy tale become evidence of the crisis faced by people who have lost touch with their own

cultural past. As a result, great works become mere sounds and "beautiful words" rather than meanings.

Conclusion

Thus, an analysis of the novel "Kys" allows us to conclude that mythology and fairy tale in this work play not a secondary, but a fundamental role in constructing the artistic world. They become not simply elements of stylization or references to tradition, but the primary mode of existence for the characters' consciousness and their perception of reality.

In the world depicted by the author, a profound cultural degradation is taking place, resulting in the destruction of the coherent system of knowledge accumulated by humanity. In its place, a special type of thinking emerges—mythological. However, this is no longer an organic and living myth, as in traditional cultures, but a distorted, fragmented form devoid of internal logic. Myth in the novel ceases to explain the world and begins only to perpetuate fear, ignorance, and subordination.

The fairy-tale structures underlying the narrative are also transformed. Outwardly, the novel retains the hallmarks of a fairy tale: the presence of a hero, his journey, and his encounter with the "miraculous." However, the fairy tale's internal logic is disrupted: the hero does not undergo genuine spiritual development, does not attain truth, and does not acquire wisdom. On the contrary, his path leads to an even greater dependence on illusions and false notions. In this way, the author demonstrates the crisis of the very idea of personal development in the context of cultural decline.

Of particular significance is the process of folklore's degradation, manifested in the distortion of texts, the loss of meaning in words, and the merging of various cultural layers. As a result, folklore becomes an empty form, devoid of content. Words continue to exist, but cease to convey meaning; texts are preserved, but are not understood; tradition is reproduced, but no longer understood. This leads to the formation of a pseudo-culture that imitates the authentic culture but is incapable of fulfilling its functions.

It's important to note that mythology in the novel also serves a social function: it becomes an instrument of power. Through fear, superstition, and false beliefs, the existing order is maintained, precluding critical thinking. Thus, myth ceases to be a means of cognition and becomes a means of manipulation.

Overall, Kys's work represents a profound philosophical statement about the fate of culture and humanity. The author demonstrates that the loss of connection with tradition and the inability to understand and comprehend cultural heritage lead not only to the simplification of life, but to its radical distortion. A person deprived of genuine culture finds themselves immersed in a world of simulations, where myth and fairy tale exist only as shadows of themselves.

Consequently, the mythological and fairy-tale elements in the novel are the key to understanding its ideological content: through their transformation, the tragedy of the loss of meaning, memory, and the very essence of humanity is revealed.

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