MYTH AS A STRUCTURE FORMATIVE FACTOR
IN THE PROSE OF ANDREY PLATONOV

Keba O. V.

INTRODUCTION

A lot of studies was suggested about mythological component of the works of Andrey Platonov. However, the focus of the researchers was mainly made on the interpretation of mythological images, motifs, plot models and situations[1]. Until recently, they also paid their attention to the interpretation of ideological myths in his works[2]; but now it is evident that this was only a surface of both individual and fictional mythology of Platonov. Thus, when talking about thorough existential and ideological mythology of "The Foundation Pit" author, close connections between Platonov's insight into archetypical essence of a human being and full involvement of the characters (i.e. of the author, as well) into social and historical reality of the 21st century are to be taken into consideration.

In this sense, the Finnish researcher Heli Kostov put forward very precise and methodologically productive prolegomena to the understanding of the fictional world of Platonov. She states that when examining the works of the author, we distinguish a developed system of notions concerning human existence in the world. This system provides *the explanation* of existence that is regarded as the Platonov's myth, which at the different periods of his creative activity depicted both

---

[1] See: Naiman, Eric. The Thematic Mythology of Andrej Platonov. *Russian Literature* XXI (1987). P. 189–216; Бочаров С. Г. Вещество существования. *О художественных мирах*. Москва : Советская Россия, 1985. С. 249–296; Дмитровская М. А. Мифопоэтические представления о связи души и дыхания у А. Платонова. *Логический анализ языка. Образ человека в культуре и языке* / РАН, Ин-т языкознания ; отв. ред. Н. Д. Арутюнова, И. Б. Левонтина. Москва : Индрик, 1999. С. 346–355; Дмитровская М. А. Трансформации мифологемы мирового дерева у А. Платонова. *Логический анализ языка: Языки пространств* / РАН, Ин-т языкознания ; отв. ред. Н. Д. Арутюнова, И. Б. Левонтина. Москва : Языки русской культуры, 2000. С. 420–428; Костов, Хели. Мифопоэтика Андрея Платонова в романе "Счастливая Москва". Helsinki : Helsinki University Press, 2000. 325 с.

[2] See: Золотоносов М. "Ложное солнце": "Чевенгур" и "Котлован" в контексте советской культуры 1920-х гг. *Андрей Платонов: Мир творчества*. Москва : Современный писатель, 1994. С. 246–283.

unchanging and changing principles of his works**.** Therefore, orientation toward mythological thinking is viewed as the main unchanging modeling principle of his poetics. Hence, the attitude to the utopian projects concerning the recreation of the world and the role and place of a human in these processes can be regarded as the changing one[3]. This problem formulation is needed to conduct a widespread investigation of literary heritage of Platonov. The aim of the research is to identify how the orientation toward myth in a more comprehensive sense of this phenomenon, comprises mythological thinking and analyzes archetypical complexes) affects the structuring of the writer's fictional world. At the same time we are going to concentrate on the distinctive features peculiar to the fictional embodiment of archaic plot schemes and patterns (return, circular motion, initiation*,* climax-anticlimax), principles of text architectonics, isomorphism of spatial models, poetics of demetaphorization and perceptualization, implementation of pre-logical thinking patterns within a language*,* distinctive anomalous orientation of statements, breach of semantic and syntactic valency, etc.

1. The Myth of «the Eternal Return» in the Poetics of Andrey Platonov

Structure formative dominants of the Platonov's prose are related with one of the fundamental ideas of mythological worldview; it is Nietzsche's idea of eternal return (also known as eternal recurrence), actualized at the turn of 19th – 20th centuries, and developed in the writings of many anthropologists, ethnographers, and world religions explorers. In this connection E. Meletiskiy, noting the role of Mircea Eliade in investigation the mythologema of «beginning», influenced by some Nietzsche ideas, writes: "This feeling of eternal going round has proved consonant to the modernistic literature. Meanwhile, the absence of historical time in the myth (in contrast to a modernistic novel) is only a by-product of a certain manner of thinking, but not the purose of mythology and certainly not the expression of the subjective fear of history…"[4].

Platonov however viewed the idea of eternal return only as a fertile multipronged fictional embodiment – from a meaningful motif of a man's

---

[3] Костов, Хели. Мифопоэтика Андрея Платонова в романе "Счастливая Москва". Helsinki : Helsinki University Press. 325 с.

[4] Мелетинский Е.М. Поэтика мифа. Москва : Наука, 1976. С. 400.

"return" to the "initial" phase of his life till "recurrence"– as specific narrative strategy and literal realization of metaphor "return to the womb", dimensional models of isomorphism and narrative discourse peculiarities as well.

Principals of mythological cumulativeness and specific spontaneous narrative are observed at the level of Platonov's text architectonics. The author declines to divide his works into chapters and parts (but he inserts peculiar spaces in the text which are probably used to direct reading); hence the episodes are arranged in chronological order, not employing any "specific" structural organization.

This approach was important for Platonov because of its focus on the method of "intuitive" writing, according to which "naturalness" and an "unartful" way of storytelling in a fiction work, should be expressed at the architectonic level of the text structure. However, the external "chaos" of textual conglomeration is nothing but an fictional illusion, followed by a strict narrative order; therefore everything in Platonov's works is thought out, every detail is considered and justified by fictional objectives.

The architectonics of Platonov's text constitutes such elements as parallelism, repetition of situations in the story and reiteration of certain expressions; quite often parallel points of view on the same object are observed, and different characters follow the same way. Thus, in the novel "Chevengur" Alexander (Sasha) Dvanov and Zakhar Pavlovich (his fosterer and nurse father) follow the same path, but when a cemetery comes in their view at different time, each of them recalls the drowned fisherman. Platonov depicts "returns" in such a manner that they occur not only in a certain place, but in former times, usually in childhood. This variation of the motif is depicted in "Chevengur": "Днем Дванов узнал старую дорогу, которую видел в детстве. <...> звук знакомого колокола Дванов услышал как время детства. <...>"[5].

It is generally known that Platonov uses in his works a wide range of recurring motifs that have archaic mythological origin. It is also significant to mention that motifs are considered to be an important element of the composition. They do not fall out of touch with a reader, and make him concentrate on recurring motifs in a novel, combining in

---

[5] Платонов А.П. Чевенгур / Сост., вступ. ст., коммент. Е.А. Яблокова. М.: Высш. шк., 1991. С. 397.

such a way all elements of the narration into a unified whole, and constructing integrity of the text first of all in the reader's perception.

Retardation method is also the one of great importance in the context of mythological narration. Sleeping, illness and intensified imagination of the characters perform the function of retardation in the novel "Chevengur". The expansion of these elements of composition creates an impression that the characters drop out of the real life and biographical time, switching their attention to the world of their inner life that seems to be as essential as the real life is. It is quite unusual, because there is no emphasis on the moments, when that "switching" occurs; therefore the novel reflects an exceptional human world (inner world of separate individuality) in which harmony with the reality cannot be achieved; hence the real world is replaced by "hallucinogenic epic" as it once said a French researcher who investigated the literal heritage of Platonov[6].

Fictional world of the author grew out of a specific kind of isomorphism, poetics and anthropology. Its peculiar features can be illustrated on the example of correlation of the whole narration structure in the novel "Chevengur" with the sketch of a monument to the revolution in a project that was drawn up by Alexander Dvanow: "Лежачая восьмерка означает вечность времени, а стоячая двухконечная стрела – бесконечность пространства..."[7]. This figure reflects the principals that influence formation of syntagmatic and paradigmatic union in the novel. The recumbent figure eight represents the development of the storyline that is progressing at first sight, but, in fact, the plot is gradually regressing, zigzagging and turning back to the centre (this is how the idea of "true" life is achieved, the meaning of life is found and the gap between a man and his life is closed) crossing outlying and distant points (these are all possible variants of manifestation of "communism"), i.e "the only true" life, and interpretation of these concepts by main characters). The upright arrow with two ends is a symbol of penetrating through the realms of the novel and their unification, comprising a single ideological complex with the same center. Paradigmatic of the novel is defined by ambivalent interpenetrative concepts of life and death, loneliness and brotherhood, thought and sense, motion and motionlessness, leave and return. Their

---

[6] Платоновский вестник. Воронеж, 2000. С. 84.
[7] Платонов А.П. Чевенгур, 144.

correspondence is arranged according to the principle of conjunction, which was described by Lucien Lévy-Bruhl in the context of primitive mentality, – "and…and", susceptible of "the excluded third" (opposed to logical disjunction – either…or)[8].

In connection with the idea of mythological isomorphism and its importance in the world of Platonov's fiction, a solid research into the structure of Platonov's text by E. Rudakovskaya must be taken into account as well[9]. Concentrating her attention on the peculiarities of syntax in "Chevengur" (particularly, on the principles of combination of clauses with polynomials), she demonstrated its correspondence with the text structure on the whole. She states, that the combination of clauses within polynomials and their joining can be compared with the construction of the novel in general, since there is no division of the text into chapters, and the plot development, which is determined by stringing episodes together. In the sentences, polynomials are characterized by irregular logical structurization of reported material. Peculiar linear embranchment, anticipation of some elements of the content and their phased but uneven clarification, that is conveyed either through gradual story development or through regressive revision and supplementary detalization are also observed. An idea can be expanded in the text recurring to a certain moment and concretizing it[10]. It is how the plot of Platonov's novel develops, disclosing nuances concerning interpretation of social and philosophical problems in every new episode.

They say, that Russian literature as well as Platonov's prose is an example of literature of a Word, not of a Text[11]. It seems that, a known literary critic N. Kornienko, the author of this statement, is not absolutely right. Platonov responded ironically to formalists especially to Victor Shklovsky as they put the problem of the Text first. Nevertheless, Platonov's works are considered as the texts in the true sense of this literary term, i.e. they are vividly structured and organized. N. Kornienko herself states that "Chevengur" was made up not only of layers (Lev Shubin), it was also created by principle of inverse perspective: moving

---

[8] See: Мелетинский Е.М. Поэтика мифа. Москва : Наука, 1976. С. 351–352.

[9] Рудаковская Э. Роман Андрея Платонова "Чевенгур": синтаксис предложения и построение текста *Русская филология.* Тарту, 1996. N7. С. 226–235.

[10] Ibid., 227.

[11] Sprache und Erzählhaltung bei Andrej Platonov / hrsg. von R. Hodel und I.P. Locher. Bern : Lang, 1998 (Slavica Helvetica. Bd. 58). S. 193.

from the part that describes present-day reality to the beginning and then to the final. Phrase "ветхая опушка" (fringes of decay) appeared on the first page of the novel after the word "ветхий" (from Proto-Slavic "vetъхъ" meaning "old", "ancient") established several abstract notions in the novel and giving them the same recurring perspective (from present – to past)[12]. In other words, the novel was created not only as a certain embodiment of idiostylistic paradigm, but also as the Text, penetrated with peculiar internal rhymes – motifs, situations, narrative models.

Among these narrative models, the archetypical model of the "leave" is considered the most important one. Platonov's characters set on a journey in order to accomplish a task, important for "common and individual existence". The most significant in this context are three "leavings" of Alexander Dvanov, the main character "Chevengur". The first one, when Prokhor Abramovich, step-father of an orphan, send the boy to beg on the streets of the city, Sasha discovered a new "alien and frightful" world. The second one, when the protagonist (before his trip under socialism") imagined himself "машинистом той лесовозной дороги, которая возит бревна на постройку новых городов…"[13]; And the third and the most important one, before his departure for Chevengur Alexander dreamt about his father, who said: "Делай что-нибудь в Чевенгуре: зачем же мы будем мертвыми лежать..."[14].

The motif of "leave and return" rises the narration to the level of metaplot, that is arranged as the intersection of two main storylines: the history of Chevengur and the life story of Alexander Dvanov. On the one hand, the ruin of Chevengur signifies going back to the way things were in the history, displays rejection of "revolutionary movement acceleration" of time and shows breach of natural flow of life. On the other hand, the end of the earthy journey of Sasha Dvanov, who voluntary departured in the waters of Lake Mutevo, symbolizes reunion with his drowned father, and his return to the primary sources, "в родину жизни и трудолюбия"[15]. In the novel his journey from a fishing-rod that was kept in the memory of his father and his return to it after the Chevengur

---

[12] Sprache und Erzählhaltung bei Andrej Platonov / hrsg. von R. Hodel und I.P. Locher. Bern : Lang, 1998 (Slavica Helvetica. Bd. 58). S. 196.
[13] Платонов А.П. Чевенгур, 91.
[14] Ibid., 241.
[15] Ibid., 397

fell – is symbolizing the same circular motion, where the process of self-knowledge takes place. It is remarkable that the description of this "departure" does not leave an impression about the finality of the death: Sasha "продолжая свою жизнь, сам сошел с седла в воду <...> в поисках той дороги, по которой когда-то прошел отец"[16].

The recurring motif in the Platonov's prose has a peculiar sematic meaning that conveys the idea of "returning to the womb". In "Chevengur" the clue to decode the novel is given in the first part of the book, where the death of "senior engineer foreman" is described: "никакой смерти он не чувствовал – прежняя теплота тела была с ним, только раньше он ее никогда не ощущал <...> Все это уже случалось с ним, но очень давно, и где – нельзя вспомнить. <...> Наставник вспомнил, где он видел эту тихую горячую тьму: это просто теснота внутри его матери, и он снова всовывается меж ее расставленных костей, но не может пролезть от своего слишком большого старого роста..."[17] (compare similar motif in other place: "...У меня тут их целый склад: сам от детонации обратно в мать полезешь!"[18]).

In ethnography this motif is called "Regressus ad uterum", i.e. "back to the womb" and is described concerning initiation rites, where it is used to define "rebirth"[19]. In Christian mythology, this term was slightly transformed. An episode from a Gospel that describes a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, the Pharisee provides an illustrative example of it: '"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit " [John 3: 4-5].

S. Khoruzhy, a known literary critic and translator, discloses typological closeness of Platonov's mythopoetic and mythologization of Joyce, and considers them to be "Eleusinian artists" as both of them use the mythologeme of return to the primary source, to the womb as a

---

[16] Платонов А.П. Чевенгур, 397.

[17] Ibid., 68.

[18] Ibid., 150.

[19] Еліаде М. Священне і мирське; Міфи, сновидіння і містерії; Мефістофель і андрогін; Окультизм, ворожбитство та культурні уподобання / Пер. з нім., фр., англ. Київ : Видавництво Соломії Павличко "Основи", 2001. С. 100–105.

structure forming element in their works. Referring to the episode concerning the death of senior engineer foreman in "Chevengur", where the author writes out this mythologeme using richness of the detail, S. Khoruzhy focuses his attention on "Kotlovan" ("The Foundation Pit") and states that the mysticism of the narrative comprises returning into the Earth, stooping down and reaching the depth that define the Eleusinian mysteries[20]. The so-called mysterial "code" in the prose of A. Platonov of the late 1920s – 1930s. is identified and carefully examined in the monograph by Ye. Proskurina[21]. The author, in particular, notes that most of the "mystical" motifs in Platonov's prose are of mythological origin. Among them the myth of water is of fundamental importance. For instance, Leonid Karasev, known Russian literary critic, notes: Platonov's preoccupation with water is one of the most important aspects of his literary writings. Drawing particular attention to Platonov's "mythology of water," he claims that the writer is wholly immersed in the water imagery that nourishes his plot[22].

According to the mythological theory, there are two dynamic archetypes in the ancient layers of the human consciousness: one of them is connected with inner motion (to you) and outer movement (from you). In ancient Greece these archetypes had two corresponding with them mythologemes – the one of Demeter and the other of Dionysus; hence there are two types of the matter: Eleusinian and Orphic. The Eleusinian mysteries took place in Eleusis and were devoted to Demeter, the goddess of the agriculture and the fertility, who was equated with "Mother-Earth". In this connection, the motif of "Mother-Earth" is constantly used in Platonov's prose. The ideas of Eleusinian mysteries are prolonged in Christian mythology (The Parable of the Growing Seed is an illustrative example of it). In contrast to ancient mythological understanding, Christianity added fundamentally new idea of salvation and immortality of a person to it. Thanks to this concept, human life finds its spiritual and

[20] Хоружий С.С. "Улисс" в русском зеркале *Джойс Дж. Избранное*: В 2 т. Т. 2. Москва : Терра, 1997. С. 526.

[21] Проскурина Е.Н. Поэтика мистериальности в прозе Андрея Платонова конца 20–30-х годов (на материале повести «Котлован»). Новосибирск : Сибирский хронограф, 2001. 261 с.

[22] Карасев Л. Движение по склону: (пустота и вещество в мире А. Платонова). *Вопросы философии.* 1995. № 8. С. 133.

moral meaning, which is not exactly inherent in mythological version of the archetype.

Platonov uses recurring motifs for not only describing situations or going into details; he also employs them at the level of figurative language. It is seen due to the high frequency of use of the word "back" (according to our calculations it occurs 46 times in the original "Chevengur") and it is usually used in the meaning of "again". (compare: "Когда он ложился обратно спать..."[23]; "деревня десять раз выходила, а потом обратно селилась..."[24]).

2. Mythologism and Spatio-Temporal Composition of the Text

Embodiment of different types of Platonov's mythologism is found within spatio-temporal composition of the text. It seems that the author keeps in a secret the exact time and place of the events in the novel. Even such works as "The Foundation Pit" or "Chevengur" that seem to be deeply ingrained into the social and historical chronotope, are practically deprived of exact temporal and spatial coordinates. The beginning of "Chevengur" is significant: "Есть ветхие *опушки* у старых провинциальных *городов…*"[25] (italics supplied). Sharp distinctions between the words from different lexical and semantical classes are used by the author in order to underline that the action takes place at the turn of nature and civilization. This narrative emphasizes its philosophical and ontological meaning from the very beginning of the text.

It is fixed in the author's narrative and in characters' manner of speaking as well. Apart from the fact that spatio-temporal coordinates and psychologization of time (visions, imagination etc.) are blended, one of the most peculiar features of Platonov's method is the phenomenon of anthropologation of space and place. It is fixed in the author's narrative and in characters' manner of speaking as well. The words *space* and *time* insert not characteristic for both of them word-combinations: on the one hand, they have a status of "humanization": "поникшего пространства"; "притаившихся пространств"; "трудолюбивые времена"; "грустное время"[26]; on the other hand, time just as space obtained physical

---

[23]Платонов А.П. Чевенгур, 27.

[24] Ibid., 32.

[25] Ibid., 24.

[26] Ibid., 136, 246, 322, 388.

characteristics, and becomes an object of perception: "портится время"; "невидимое время"; "время стало слышным"[27]. Platonov's manner of speaking discloses peculiar to mythological thinking spatialization (time is replaced by space): "Чепурный вместе с пролетариатом и прочими остановился среди лета, среди времени и всех волнующихся стихий…"; "всё живущее находилось где-то посредине времени и своего движения"[28]. Thus, we can state that Platonov's mythologization of time is characterized not only by metaphorical interpretation, and its distinctive features concern the peculiarity of worldview is depicted at the level of his figurative language in prose.

Platonov employs a wide range of devices to set reversible time layers in the consciousness of the characters. For instance, in "Chevengur" Zakhar Pavlovich, a step-father of Dvanov is described as follows: "Сколько ни жил Захар Павлович, он с удивлением видел, что он не меняется и не умнеет – остается ровно таким же, каким был в десять или пятнадцать лет. Лишь некоторые его прежние предчувствия теперь стали обыкновенными мыслями, но от этого ничего к лучшему не изменилось. Свою будущую жизнь он раньше представлял синим глубоким пространством – таким далеким, что почти не существующим. Захар Павлович знал вперед, что чем дальше он будет жить, тем это пространство непережитой жизни будет уменьшаться, а позади – удлиняться мертвая растоптанная дорога. И он обманулся: жизнь росла и накоплялась, а будущее впереди тоже росло и простиралось – глубже и таинственней, чем в юности, словно Захар Павлович отступал от конца своей жизни либо увеличивал свои надежды и веру в нее"[29]. Consecutive realization of views concerning reversible reflection of the past and the future in "Chevengur" that correspond to such paradoxical expressions of the characters as: "в память будущего"[30], "помнил о дальнейшем"[31] etc. As if they illustrate one of the most important characteristics of mythological thinking that is described by mythologists, who conclude that the past is interpreted as a visible part of our life that is right in front

---

[27] Ibid., 242, 292, 346.
[28] Платонов А.П. Чевенгур, 296, 67.
[29] Ibid., 57.
[30] Ibid., 186.
[31] Ibid., 29.

of our vision and is ahead, therefore the future is perceived as something invisible, something that is behind[32].

Specific mental mimesis also occurs in Platonov's texts; mental mimesis is a state when consciousness not only reproduces and creates the world around, but also follows and generates it in one's own image. Coherent explanation of this phenomenon is provided in the novel "Chevengur": "В семнадцать лет Дванов еще не имел брони над сердцем – ни веры в бога, ни другого умственного покоя; он не давал чужого имени открывающейся перед ним безымянной жизни. Однако он не хотел, чтобы мир оставался ненареченным, – он только ожидал услышать имя из его же уст, вместо нарочно выдуманных прозваний"[33]. In other words, the subject imitates the object here and flows together with it. Thus, the characters and the author himself are learning to speak, being in the stage of development of the language and consciousness, when a name corresponds to the object it calls.

In this case, nondifferenciation of a subject and object defines mythological way of thinking. Describing this phenomenon, . Potebnia claimed that as the image is considered to be objective, it can be converted into a meaning and can form the basis of further conclusions about the characteristics of a denotive notion, as well[34].

Subjective field of Platonov's works is full of mythological connotations. A semantic filling of the motif concerning "unnecessary" things, is observed in many works of the author, however a special emphasis is put on the novel "Chevengur". Zakhar Petrovich, a central character of introductory part of the novel is depicted as the one who "делал ненужные вещи: башни из проволок, корабли из кусков кровельного железа, клеил бумажные дирижабли и прочее – исключительно для собственного удовольствия. Часто он даже задерживал чей-нибудь случайный заказ – например, давали ему на кадку новые обручи подогнать, а он занимался устройством деревянных часов, думая, что они должны ходить без завода – от вращения Земли"[35]. Such behavior of Zakhar Petrovich embodies one

---

[32] Степанов Ю.С. Константы. Словарь русской культуры. Опыт исследования. М.: Школа "Языки русской культуры", 1997. С. 172.
[33] Платонов А.П. Чевенгур, 71.
[34] Потебня А.А. Теоретическая поэтика. М.: Высш. шк., 1990. С. 287.
[35] Платонов А.П. Чевенгур, 24.

of the most archaic models of a mythopoetic creative work, when a poet separates the initial unity of the universe, determining the nature of its parts, and then defines the equality system and synthesizes a new unity, as V. N. Toporov states[36].

3. Mythological Aspects of in the Speech Structure of A. Platonov's Works. Metamorphosis and Demetaphorization

Mythological nature of human consciousness is manifested in the specific speech structure of Platonov's works as well. The writer gravitates to such type of artistic speech, in which a specific sensual, perceptual feeling of reality reveals the direct embodiment. The Platonov's characters, and with them the author himself, wherever possible, strive to ensure that the language contains only the visible and the sensed, and the physical concepts are inherent in abstract concepts or mental phenomena.

These and similar phrases may be interpreted as metaphorical expressions. However, the mythological word in its nondiscrimination between concrete and abstract, direct and figurative meanings is devoid of metaphor. Similarly, the Platonov word turns into a demetaphorized one, appears rather as a sign of metamorphosis, literal transformation. For the first time S. Bocharov drew attention to the role of metamorphosis in the Platonov's world: "Platonov metaphorics has a character that brings it closer to the original soil of metaphor – faith in real transformation, metamorphosis…"[37]. It is interesting that in Platonov's works metamorphosis is not only one of the speech means, but also an unfolded plot motif, as for example in the story "Mysornyj veter" ("The Garbage Wind"). The anomalously grotesque expressions of both the narrator and the heroes of Platonov convey the intention to express as accurately as possible the essence of the thought, and express it exactly in the form in which it appears in the human mind (compare: "книжки читал вслух, чтобы загадочные мертвые знаки превращать в звуковые вещи"; "живешь всегда вперед и в темноту"[38] etc.). Platonov's heroes "бормочут свои мысли", because they do not know how to "think

---

[36] Мифы народов мира. Энциклопедия. В 2-х тт. Гл. ред. С.А. Токарев. Москва : Сов. энциклопедия, 1980. Т. 2. К-Я. С. 327.

[37] Бочаров С. Г. Вещество существования. *О художественных мирах*. Москва : Советская Россия, 1985. С. 259.

[38] Платонов А.П. Чевенгур, 185, 278.

silently", they have to "свое умственное волнение переложить в слово, а уж потом, слыша слово, они могут ясно его чувствовать"[39]; speaking they "не говорят, а думают", for "пока слово не скажешь, то умным не станешь, оттого что в молчании ума нет – есть одно мученье чувства"[40]; for those who do not have "силы мысли", feelings remain unspoken, turning into some kind of "мучительную боль". "Кто учился думать при революции, тот всегда говорил вслух, ... думая что-то в своем закрытом уме", so "во всяком прочем сначала происходила не мысль, а некоторое давление темной теплоты, а затем она кое-как выговаривалась, охлаждаясь от истечения"[41].

In describing the heroes attempts to realize the world and their place in it, the writer constantly resorts to shifts of the narrative perspective, when the generalization is combined with singularity, abstraction with concreteness, and it is emphasized by repetitions of lexical means and parallelism of lexical-semantic constructions. For example: "Яков Титыч *любил* вечерами лежать в траве, видеть *звезды я смирять себя размышлением,* что есть отдаленные светила, на них происходит нелюдская неиспытанная жизнь, а ему она недостижима и не предназначена; Яков Титыч *поворачивал* голову, *видел* засыпающих соседей и грустил за них"[42] (italics supplied). Here two plans are emphasized: the concrete one, connected with the direct actions of Jacob Titych, and the abstract one, relating to his thoughts about life. Moreover, in concrete plan, two aspects are also singled out: first, a kind of long-term actions are given, transmitted by the form of the compound verb predicate: ("любил лежать", "видеть", "смирять себя размышлением"), and then the result of reflection, the collision of a dream with reality is submitted ("поворачивал", "видел", "грустил"). The actions of the hero at the beginning and after thoughts about life are correlated by the parallelism of homogeneous predicates; the ratio of objects of perception is especially significant: "видел звезды", потом – "видел соседей".

The distinctive "explanatory" Platonov's manner of writing corresponds at the syntactic level to a significant number of complex sentences. Speech is structured in such a way that its links cannot exist

---

[39] Платонов А.П. Чевенгур, 134.
[40] Ibid., 261.
[41] Ibid., 130, 451.
[42] Ibid., 297.

one without the other. Causal relationships here are brought to the fore. The actual syntactic developer of this is the ultimate saturation (often anomalously redundant) of the text with the corresponding subordinate unions (most often because and so). Here we can provide two illustrative examples from "Chevengur": "Чепурный положил голову на руки и стал не думать, чтобы скорее прошло ночное время. И время прошло скоро, потому что время – это ум, а не чувство, и потому что Чепурный ничего не думал в уме"; "…привязываться же к живому предмету для Якова Титыча было необходимо, чтобы во внимании и снисхождении к нему найти свое терпение жить и чтобы из наблюдений узнавать, как надо жить легче и лучше; кроме того, в созерцании чужой жизни расточалась, из сочувствия, жизнь самого Якова Титыча, потому что ей некуда было деваться, он существовал в остатке и в излишке населения земли"[43].

Such structure of phrase shows permanent concern of the author and the characters about expediency of existence. At the same time, they raise immense problems and difficulties that conflict with human consciousness when trying to resolve this existential and epistemological contradiction. These words and phrases are also very ambiguous since they display quasi-logic of Platonov's characters; however, the aim of the author is not to correct it but to emphasize the painstaking search of vital basics, and their attempt to comprehend essential existential contradictions.

That is why when identifying words of the characters or some fragments of text with the author's language we notice some kind of confusion and indistinguishable notions in the novel. Analyzing the opening sentence of "Chevengur" about "ветхих опушках" (fringes of decay) we can see that the phenomena of nature and culture have paradoxical interdependence and interconnection. The text further follows a series of situations that match the strangeness of the narrative plan with the strangeness of the world described. Here they make "unnecessary" things like a wooden clock, coming from the rotation of the Earth, "cure" babies from hunger with poisonous mushroom tincture, believe in the possibility of "living in death", forever die out of the "interest" in death etc.

Tendency to mythopoetic in the prose of Andrey Platonov defines its lyrical origin. It is generally accepted that literary mythology of the 20th

---

[43] Платонов А.П. Чевенгур, 276, 329.

century has intellectual origin, i.e. literary and philosophical reminiscences take part in its creation and social and cultural allusions etc. In Platonov's works mythology descends from the deeps of organic perception of human world view. Thus, the key words to define the world of "Chevengur" ("earth", "sun", "water") are connected with folklore and mythological tradition: "earth" – "mother", "sun" – "worker", "water" – "the source of life". Metaphorical ckystructions used in this context gain peculiar qualities: literally use of figurative meaning converts a metaphor into metamorphosis, and in this way the author provides proteism of all elements of the fictional world.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, Platonov goes far beyond the first stage of the mythological poetics, while other writers exploit mythological motifs and images. His mythologism is based on artistic intuition, it is born from the organic perception of the depths of collective memory and it involves all elements of the author artistic world into the sphere of mythological transformation. This is manifested in the fact that mythologization is revealed at all levels of poetics, creating its special quality – isomorphism of the ontological and anthropological aspects of the author's fictional conception.

At the plot and compositional level, mythologism in Platonov's works actualizes repetitive situations and motifs of archetypal origin. Performing the most important semantic role, these ones contribute to the "binding" of the whole narration, defragmentation of the architectonics of the text and the reader's reconstruction of its integrity.

At the chronotopic level of poetics, the mythological principle finds itself in a mixture of space and time coordinates of the action and objectification of the archetypical properties of mythological thinking in the form of so-called spacialization (replacing time with space, spreading time representations and simultaneous psychologization in the format of visions, fantasies, etc.). The reciprocity and interdigability of the past and the future from the point of view of the writer's characters is determined by the idea of a cyclical world order. The Platonov's world and the text likened to it are based on a special kind of mental mimeism, when consciousness not only reproduces and creates the world but also follows it, depicting it in an external image and likeness.

The specificity of the objective and descriptive sphere in the Platonov's works is determined by the mythological dominants as well.

60

The actions of the characters aimed at the real world, as a rule, lack rationalism and repeat the archaic model of mythopoetic creativity, in accordance with which the initial dismemberment of the unity of the world entails further restoring its integrity through a system of diverse identifications.

The peculiarity of the speech structure of Platonov's works is defined as the mythological interpretation of the world perception, typical to the implicit author and characters. It is manifested in the non-delimitation of the abstract and concrete, external and internal, subject and object, cause and effect.

SUMMARY

This article concerns mythologism as a constitutive factor and distinctive element of Andrey Platonov's prose that enlivens isomorphism at the level of his poetic manner. The topic focusses on myth and correlations between plot and composition, spatio-temporal peculiarities, representational and linguistic elements within the structure of his prose. Fictional world of Platonov is organized according to the principle of conjunction that corresponds to mythological logic; therefore there is no contradiction within the framework of the world. Most of his works comprise the plotlines that develop an archaic and universal plot scheme employing "leave–return" technique. Platonov's narrative strategies are defined by mythological cumulativeness and recurring literary devices (constant repetition of motifs). At the heart of Platonov's chronotopic text structure is distinctive to mythological thinking anthropologation of spatio-temporal vision. Peculiar language arrangement of his works is determined by mythological perception of the world, that reveals nondifferentiation of abstract and concrete, inner and outer, subject and object, and of cause and effect. Such systematic focus (both conscious and subconscious) on myth and mythological structures allows us to interpret the fictional world of Andrey Platonov as a myth-orientated and myth defining one.

REFERENCES

1. Sprache und Erzählhaltung bei Andrej Platonov / hrsg. von R. Hodel und I.P. Locher. Bern : Lang, 1998 (Slavica Helvetica. Bd. 58). 373 s.

2. Бочаров С. Г. Вещество существования *О художественных мирах*. Москва : Советская Россия, 1985. С. 249–296.

3. Дмитровская М. А. Мифопоэтические представления о связи души и дыхания у А. Платонова *Логический анализ языка. Образ человека в культуре и языке* / РАН, Ин-т языкознания ; отв. ред. Н. Д. Арутюнова, И. Б. Левонтина. Москва : Индрик, 1999. С. 346–355.

4. Дмитровская М. А. Трансформации мифологемы мирового дерева у А. Платонова *Логический анализ языка: Языки пространств* / РАН, Ин-т языкознания ; отв. ред. Н. Д. Арутюнова, И. Б. Левонтина. Москва : Языки русской культуры, 2000. С. 420–428.

5. Еліаде М. Священне і мирське; Міфи, сновидіння і містерії; Мефістофель і андрогін; Окультизм, ворожбитство та культурні уподобання / пер. з нім., фр., англ. Київ : Видавництво Соломії Павличко "Основи", 2001. 591 с.

6. Золотоносов М. "Ложное солнце": "Чевенгур" и "Котлован" в контексте советской культуры 1920-х гг. *Андрей Платонов: Мир творчества*. Москва : Современный писатель, 1994. С. 246–283.

7. Карасев Л. Движение по склону: (пустота и вещество в мире А. Платонова). *Вопросы философии.* 1995. № 8. С.123–143.

8. Костов Хели. Мифопоэтика Андрея Платонова в романе "Счастливая Москва". Helsinki : Helsinki University Press, 2000. 325 с.

9. Мелетинский Е.М. Поэтика мифа. Москва : Наука, 1976. 408 с.

10. Мифы народов мира. Энциклопедия. В 2-х тт. Гл. ред. С.А. Токарев. Москва : Сов. энциклопедия, 1980. Т. 2. К-Я. 720 с.

11. Мущенко Е. Г. О мифотворчестве А. Платонова *Воронежский край и зарубежье : А. Платонов, И. Бунин, Е. Замятин, О. Мандельштам и др. в культуре ХХ в.* Воронеж: Ворон. гос. ун-т. 1992. С. 6–9.

12. Пастушенко Ю. Г. Мифологическая символика в романе "Чевенгур" *Филологические записки.* Вып.13. Воронеж, 1999. С. 28–39.

13. Платонов А. П. Чевенгур / Сост., вступ. ст., коммент. Е. А. Яблокова. Москва : Высшая школа, 1991. 654 с.

14. Платоновский вестник. Вып.1. Воронеж, 2000. 90 с.

15. Потебня А. А. Теоретическая поэтика. Москва : Высшая школа, 1990. 344 с.

16. Проскурина Е. Н. Поэтика мистериальности в прозе Андрея Платонова конца 20-х – 30-х годов (на материале повести «Котлован»). Новосибирск : Сибирский хронограф, 2001. 261 с.

17. Радбиль Т. Б. Мифология языка Андрея Платонова / Нижегородский государственный педагогический ун-т. Нижний Новгород : НГПУ, 1998. 114 с.

18. Рудаковская Э. Роман Андрея Платонова "Чевенгур": синтаксис предложения и построение текста *Русская филология*. Тарту, 1996. № 7. С. 226–235.

19. Степанов Ю. С. Константы. Словарь русской культуры. Опыт исследования. Москва : Школа "Языки русской культуры", 1997. 824 с.

20. Хоружий С. С. "Улисс" в русском зеркале. *Джойс Дж. Избранное: В 2 т.* Т.2. Москва : Терра, 1997. С. 361–558.

21. Ярошенко Л. В. Жанр романа-мифа в творчестве А. Платонова. Гродно : ГрГУ, 2004. 137 с.

Information about the author:
Keba O. V.
Doctor of Philological Sciences,
Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages,
Kamianets-Podilskyi National Ivan Ohiienko University
61, Ivan Ohiienko str., Kamianets-Podilskyi, 32302, Ukraine