

## MYTHOLOGIZATION AND MYTHOLOGEMS OF MODERNITY

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The mythologization of social consciousness today is epidemic in its expansion, capturing increasingly more influence. Modern myths proliferate like cancer cells, subjugating the vitality of any social organism. Entering contradictions with one another and with the external world, they become a nourishing environment for social conflicts (ethnic, interstate, geopolitical, economic), stimulating the global information warfare that is already underway.

The process of spreading the «new mythological worldview» was first noted by philosophers of the postmodern French «wave» such as R. Barthes, J. Bataille, J. Baudrillard, J. Deleuze, and J.-L. Nancy. For instance, J. Baudrillard drew attention to and revitalized the issues and specifics of information warfare [3, p. 33–36]. R. Barthes, one of the first to pose the question «What is myth in our time?», was able to identify points of intersection between traditional and modern myths, indicating that any myth is a way of signifying the world, a certain semiotic system, a verbal form into which reality flows, solidifying like jelly [1, p. 73]. A myth does not reflect reality but expresses it, simultaneously expressing the «narrator» (an individual or society) as a system of interdependent narratives. Therefore, a myth is always a history (in Barthes's words, a word chosen by history), connected with dramatic, traumatic events in the life of an individual or a nation. A myth is a so-called «distorted mirror» of reality; by distorting reality, it justifies itself, acquiring its own significance determined not in terms of truth but in terms of utility. Therefore, it is futile to deny a myth; one can only evaluate the results of its influence, as it has an imperative, motivational character based on suggestion and is intended to have a direct emotional effect.

Jean-Luc Nancy analyzed the prerequisites and reasons for the actualization of the existence of contemporary mythology, noting that today's fascination with myths is fueled by social fragmentation and singularity [6, p. 113–116]. He and Roland Barthes [1, p. 130] and Georges Bataille [2, p. 35–36] also pointed out that «magical types of behavior» are provoked by a «blind fear, fascination with the fractured social world», causing people to «bury themselves in the treacherous sands» of words – «intoxicating signs». The greater the sense of fragmentation, decay, and loneliness in the face of the

unpredictability of the external world, the greater the thirst for myths, because «we need a visible myth that would comfort us regarding our end» [3, p. 8].

Therefore, contemporary myth justifies itself; the sense of myth lies within the myth itself. This distinguishes contemporary myth from traditional myths, which were always correlated with reality and justified by this correlation: the effect of the traditional myth was to adapt to reality. Modern mythologies are the result of hypertrophied, absolute words transformed into «pure» expressions, «ideal events» belonging exclusively to the realm of language. Thus, the mythical and the logical in such a mythogen undergo confrontation at first, and then reversal: stories based on emotional experience are «told» by myth and justified logically, and then logically justified versions find «confirmation» in emotional experience. The continuous reversal of the logical and the mythical in the mythogen leads to the constant rewriting of history, with previous stories not being entirely rejected but being relegated to the reservoir of «social subconsciousness»; new stories are layered «on top»; as a result, the myth loses its initial emotional homogeneity and logical consistency, becoming a fragmented (puzzle-like) virtual reality. In essence, a mythogen is a layered formation that includes all variants of perception as series of the initial story. However, a myth by its nature cannot be polylogical; it seeks homogeneity of perception, as only in this way can it dictate the will of consciousness. Myth is not reflection but imperative. Therefore, previous series-stories are taken fragmentarily, piecing together in the sequence needed at the moment.

Comparing contemporary mythogens, myths of the past, and ideology, it is important to note the following. Traditional myth always creates a hierarchical system of images. Traditional myths have always been associated with concrete reality, whether natural or historical, although they usually reflected not so much the reality itself as the attitude toward it, the experience of this reality. Traditional myths testified to the subordination of humans (society, culture) to natural reality. But it was also an attempt to limit the influence of the natural world with certain forms, social frameworks. In the psychosomatic aspect, myths are an expression of human subconsciousness, both individual (as yet dissolved in the social) and collective subconsciousness (archetypes). Myths reflected the process of separating human communities from nature, were oriented towards the past, inclined towards roots, and were based on natural emotions and instincts. Myths simultaneously composed everyone and no one, like fairy tales and proverbs (in fact, fairy tales are formulated myths). Myths can be compared in their significance in the history and culture of individual nations as well as the world community as a whole (myths about a dying and reborn god, journeys to the underworld, apocalyptic myths, etc.).

Ideology also represents a hierarchical system of ideas. Ideology is exclusively related to social reality, not so much with the past as with the present and future, oriented towards the future. In a social sense, ideology is not only an indicator of society's influence on the individual but also an attempt to overcome this influence. Therefore, precisely in modern society with its emphasis on individuality, there arises a personal perception of reality. In its extreme variant, this is an expression of mass society; however, mass society itself emerged as a result of the emergence of large masses of individuals onto the historical stage, gaining access to education/power. Ideology provides rationalization of social and, generally, rationalization of reality. There is no place for emotions here (or at least there is a desire to minimize emotions): «only business (market)», or ideas of «social equality», or even «great nation» – it doesn't matter which ideas become leading for the masses. What is important is that through the purposeful assimilation of these ideas, the masses realize the desire to influence reality. Thus, ideas in modern times are introduced by society itself; individual representatives of it, such as Karl Marx or Adam Smith, are merely expressers of these ideas. Hence the belief in the objectivity of the laws of history/society. Ideology spreads only in society ready to accept certain ideas, thus always being immanent to social reality. Ideologies are compared by effectiveness, i.e., the ability to cover the largest social space and become engines of social development. But generally, ideology is derived from reality, it is an attempt to subjugate reality, shape it, order it, limit its influence through reason [5, p. 112–114].

A mythogen is, in fact, a fragment of rhizomatic, non-hierarchical social reality of postmodernity, polymorphic, polylogical, emphasizedly unstructured and disordered. Mythogens spread in a society of «radical pluralism», where «everything is possible» and «everything is unreliable» simultaneously, in a world more unpredictable and dynamic than the world of modernity. If the modern era, having lost faith in the axiom of the existence of God, found an alternative in human reason as the transcendental basis of personal and social existence, then in the contemporary era, humans have lost all a priori settings and transcendent ideas (metanarratives), finding themselves face to face with the chaos and singularity of the world. Moreover, the struggle against any metanarratives and transgression as overcoming all boundaries (ideological, social, psychophysiological) have been declared principles of modern social existence because surviving in a world understood as chaos can only be done, according to Gilles Deleuze, «by letting a little of the free and windy chaos into oneself» [5, p. 171].

In essence, a mythogen is an artificially constructed myth created by certain social forces or even individuals for specific social purposes. This does not mean that it does not rely on some significant history; it means that the mythogen creates a remake of history, presenting it as real history.

To paraphrase Roland Barthes, in the modern world, a trick is performed: reality is thrown, shaken out of it, and filled with... no, not with nature, as previously by Barthes, but with the same history, but shattered, fractured, and fragmented. As a result, instead of a coherent worldview, we get a mosaic, a puzzle, in which individual puzzle fragments can easily and arbitrarily be replaced by others, only similar in form and image.

The introduction of mythogens is only possible in a prepared society: a society comfortable enough materially and socially with «clip-like» thinking, because in encounters with real social difficulties, mythogens simply disintegrate, and with a healthy rational culture, they are perceived as deviance. Otherwise, social forces and elites interested in introducing certain mythogens into one or another society, while maintaining ties with a certain ethnic (national, linguistic) environment, that is, being carriers of certain narratives of this environment, will not be cosmopolitan enough to control the process of production and dissemination of informational viruses injected from outside.

#### **References:**

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