

Published by the decision of the Scientific Council  
of Khachatur Abovian  
Armenian State Pedagogical University



Department of Philosophy and Logic  
named after Academician Georg Brutian



# W I S D O M

4(20), 2021



*WISDOM is covered in Clarivate Analytics' Emerging Sources  
Citation Index service*

YEREVAN – 2021

## MYTHOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AS A FORM OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

### Abstract

The main purpose of the article is to explain the actual role of mythological consciousness in the modern spiritual life of society, thereby overcoming the generally sceptical, if not negative, attitude towards mythologisation in modern social science.

The subject of the article is nature and forms of mythological consciousness. The authors' premise is that rather than being a collection of myths, mythological consciousness is an independent way of spiritual penetration into the world, the transformation of the sensually perceivable and the sign-symbolical reality into an inseparable whole. Mythological consciousness is interpreted as an immanent component of social consciousness. A special role is assigned to the centres of mythological consciousness, in which its nature is encoded. Mythologemes, archetypes and mentality are kinds of a link between social consciousness and social unconsciousness.

By revealing the mythological nature of ideas, values, images, symbols, and signs as unavoidable forms through which worldview mindsets and conceptual pillars of modern science are formed, we find ways to unleash their true intellectual and spiritual potential.

The final result of the article is the validity of the statement that the ideological structure of modern social thought is its mythological component.

*Keywords:* mythological consciousness, myth, archetype, mentality, symbol, image, value, demythologisation, form, concentration point.

### Introduction

Many researchers believe that “myth is a form of social consciousness that emerged under the conditions of a relatively low social development” (Dictionary of Antiquity, 1993, p. 358). Today, it has become customary to simply dismiss the mythological as something obsolete, confusing and misleading. Mythological consciousness and mythologisation are often understood as a false (similar to the religious for atheists) consciousness, or a conscious ideological distortion of reality, as a substitution of understanding the essence of many processes of social life with tendentiousness and imposition of cer-

tain ideas or emotions.

The posing of the question about the nature and relevance of mythological consciousness must not be understood as going back into the far and irreversible historical past; it must not assume that mythological consciousness is characteristic only of early societies. Even today, mythologisation is not exotic at all but a common and quite widespread, albeit unrealized, process that accompanies both the regulatory systems and the cognitive activity as a whole.

It is important to remember that the age of science and its domination in the social being of people has not been around for long, only for three or four centuries; in contrast, the centuries-

long experience of spiritual cognition of the world was accumulated by absolutely different means.

Fortunately, the ability of spiritual contact with the sensually perceived world cultivated for millennia did not just disappear. This ability still exists in the social subconscious, in this endless pool of knowledge, intuition, insights and memory.

#### Nature of Mythological Consciousness

Man's spiritual connection with reality is complex, controversial and still not completely understood (if that is possible at all).

Myth and mythological consciousness are not the same, although they are often used as synonymic notions in texts. In fact, in speaking about mythological consciousness, we refer primarily to its logic (as an internal form of consciousness); in contrast, in speaking about myths, we refer to the specific forms of expressing the content of mythological consciousness.

It is primarily important to understand the differences between mythological, scientific, and philosophical thinking (consciousness).

First, from the scientific point of view, mythological thinking is primitive, illusory and fantastical. From the philosophic point of view, mythological thinking is a combination of categoricity, symbolism and images (pseudo empirical).

Second, science is based on the conceptual apparatus, philosophy relies on the categorial apparatus (Malakhov, 2007), and mythological thinking is based on the apparatus of images and ideas.

Third, mythological thinking relies on meanings. In science, the mythological meaning would be analogous to a pattern. It is the ultimate limit of scientific comprehension of reality, the transformation of reality into an endless diversity of phenomena. In philosophy, the mythological meaning would be analogous to essence. Philo-

sophy represents reality to the extent to which essence is represented in phenomena, acting as the essence of the phenomena. A phenomenon that breaks away from both the essence and the pattern becomes a myth.

Empirical thinking matches a phenomenon to an essence (reducing essence to a mere purpose, a function); mythological thinking replaces essence with meaning and a phenomenon with a sign.

Fourth – in a myth, man is present in the world and merged with it; in philosophy, man's presence in contact with reality is manifested through his separation from reality, his liberation from it. The problem of philosophy is not the definition of man in the world, but the definition of man opposed to the world, while mythological perception does not deal with the problem of the separation of man from the world.

Mythological consciousness does not express the natural inclusion of man into the world but focuses on spiritual inclusion or, more precisely, the inclusion into the world through meaning. The expulsion of mythological consciousness from the spiritual life of a society leads to the loss of its history.

Mythological consciousness is the way of direct contact with things, direct penetration into the essence of things that comes from intuition. The sensual images it creates express a huge potential of what exists and what is felt as principally unrevealed. It does not "bother" about logic, systematisation, rationality or plausibility of the world picture created by imagination. It is indifferent to distinguishing between the real and the fictitious, and even when it is not, it still distinguishes between them in its own mythological manner.

The coherence of mythological comprehension of the world is indistinguishable from what formal and logical thinking can produce. Along with that, mythological thinking does not rely on the laws of formal logic but on the logic of the inexplicable (and inexplicable) obviousness and matter-of-fact supernaturalness (the believability

of “something hidden around the corner”).

The characteristic properties of mythological consciousness are commonly associated both scientifically and in the ordinary sense with the properties of religious consciousness. It is doubtless that they are similar in relation to reality, time, and they create similar psychological and spiritual states of an individual person and society as a whole. They are similar in the mesmerizing and absorbing ambience of a sacrament. Myths, nonetheless, are not a product of religion. Mythological consciousness is not a simple derivative of religious consciousness.

The mythological and the religious are impossible outside the stream of experience; this is something they have in common. “Definitions without experience become ghosts and mislead you” (Pomerantz, 2017, p. 41), i.e. that is why they lead from the common (collective, conventional) to an individual personal being.

However, mythology and religion are unlikely to belong exclusively “to the sphere of personal being” (Losev, 1991, p. 91). In fact, what they have in common is that the personal (if it exists at all, for example, in early societies) is not separated from the impersonal. In mythological thinking, which is anthropologised in its essence, there is no clear distinction between one “I” and the other.

Human (humanized) time is manifested as the chain of “past-present-future”. The past becomes a myth, as the real is replaced with what the selective and inconstant human memory offers. The future becomes a myth, as it rests on assumptions and anticipations caused by hope and what has been experienced but is already mythologised. The present becomes a myth when it ceases to frighten people with its unpredictability and strangeness, allowing them to live by habit, routine, stagnant mind and the repetitive hustle of identical days.

In other words, thinking about time is the mythologisation of it. For mythological consciousness, time bears no meaning, as the immediate, instant and eternal (timeless, supertemporal) are

identical.

Nevertheless, this is exactly what history is. This is exactly the aspect in which man is a historical being, not just someone temporal who lives in time. This is why “myth is a historical event as such” (Losev, 1991, p. 134). A historical being lives beyond time, and it is always in the present. The past and the future are also the present for such a being, as they cannot be anything else but the present.

Consequently, human personality developed (and actually still develops spontaneously, subconsciously even today) through man’s spiritual transformation into a genus-individual, into an infinite being (in the oriental discourse - into an indefinite multitude of reincarnations), into a shell encapsulating the infinity. This phenomenon was brilliantly described, for example, by T. Mann in his novel *Joseph and his Brothers* (Mann, 1991).

In mythological consciousness, the common and the individual, the essence and the phenomenon, the necessary and the accidental etc., are not yet distinguished. Mythological consciousness is based on the equality of the individual and the common, while, for example, scientific thinking is concentrated on the specific. Philosophical thinking concentrates on the universal in its opposition to the individual; in the individual, the universal is seen as nature and essence, but they are abstracted from both the universal and the individual.

Mythological consciousness holds the core of the dialectic separation of the whole into moments, aspects and particulars. For this reason, using dialectic, be it in the remote past or in the recent time, always means, to a certain extent, a return to mythological thinking (which is evidenced in the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Oswald Spengler, Theodor Adorno, Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, A. F. Losev and many others).

In its nature, mythological consciousness is a form of natural dialectic, a sound example (and ideal) for which in West European philosophy

was set by Heraclitus.

The mythological dialectic that was, perhaps, first manifested by him is built on paradoxes, not contradictions. A paradox is a fruit of irrational thinking, not an intellectual dead-end. As a fruit of mythological consciousness, it is self-evident and self-sufficient. The presence of thinking and its true place in the world are explained most clearly by paradox. The presence and inseparability of paradox define the limits of both thinking and contemplation as such.

Philosophical dialectic is built on contradictions that occur between abstractions. It always has a component of a mystery that occurs in the form of a leap or insight or something like that, and the mystery is overcome through assuming successful completion of the stage of the rational comprehension of the transition from one state or quality into another. Contradictions are not resolved through logic, in which they are either cleverly reconciled or simply dismissed, but rather through changing the very view on them. Contradictions are resolved through understanding them as different aspects of one object, phenomenon or process, in which they do not act as contradictions anymore.

For philosophic dialectic, an encounter with a contradiction creates an impulse for cognition or, at least, a temporal relief of contradiction, while for mythological thinking, contradiction is self-sufficient, it does not create a situation of indefiniteness, incomprehension, etc., nor does it require any resolution; it is a part of a myth, being organically embedded in it.

Dialectic does not fully belong to the rational domain. Therefore, philosophical dialectic is a tricky balance between mythological thinking, where everything is similar to everything, and rational, abstract thinking, where everything relies on the specific and the integral.

Mythological consciousness is not related to explaining the cause-and-effect relations. It does not matter what comes from where; it only matters that something obviously exists, and it is enough to express and manifest this obviousness.

It lives in a world of the given, presented in its uniqueness and irreplaceability. In mythological harmony, everything is in its place; nothing is out of place (Kirsanova, 2008; Kozolupenko, 2008).

The patterns do not really explain anything; they are as random as single events. The law is an accident, a form of an accident.

The continuous change of the world is compensated with both image and non-image thinking about the world perceived in all of its patterns, endless repeatability, uniformity, solidity, integral being, permeability for comprehension etc. Such thinking strives to separate from the fragmentary concepts and judgements about the world and from the resulting tendentiousness.

The cognitive intention is alien to mythological consciousness, as it finds everything quite obvious. However, explaining the obvious, expressing it in any kind of concept, is impossible; it can only be accepted as it is. Therefore, in this case, it would be appropriate to reason as follows: "How is being represented in science? As a force that debilitates science. What can debilitate knowledge? Something that cannot be defined. Being is undefinable. It cannot be known in advance. In science, being appears as spontaneity. Being is redundant for science" (Girenok, 2004, p. 4).

Mythological consciousness reproduces its connection with reality in such a way that the myths it generates become a result of man's alienation into reality. The phenomenon of alienation also has a mythological nature. Through the prism of myth, the human becomes visible in the non-human (in nature).

However, this kind of alienation is principally different from social alienation, in the process of which the world of people is dehumanized and becomes opposed to them in its strangeness, to the point of hostility and all-mightiness. Dealienation, the return of a subject to its own self, is, in essence, the desacralisation of reality, which, again, drives a man in a situation of alienation. The world becomes strange again, but this time, dealienation also leads to fetishisation, which is

repugnant to mythological consciousness.

Mythological consciousness is neither reflective nor purely contemplative; its bearer is rooted in myth and, at the same time, is outside of it.

As long as man lives with nature and in nature, inside it, he is syncretic in his activity and consciousness, just like any other animal. However, when the man is outside nature (beyond it), nature as a whole becomes a myth, that is, a former place for man. Myth points to the place where the man used to be, but where it is not anymore. Mythological consciousness allows, albeit illusively and temporarily, to bring primary syncretism back to life and go back to the “just-being”.

Mythological consciousness does not rely on what is (this is the domain of science) or what should be (this is the domain of moral, political and legal philosophy), but on what could be. And there is nothing that could not be, as, in essence, there is no difference between real, formal and abstract possibilities; nothing is impossible. A possibility is nothing but one of the forms of the real.

In mythological consciousness, everything can transform into anything; therefore, the properties of everything and everyone are universal. This is why no object is definite enough to stand out from all the others, and no object is constant in its quality. ‘One and the same thing, one and the same personality can be... represented and expressed through an infinity of various forms, depending on the aspect of spatial-temporal being in which we think of it’ (Losev, 1991, p. 88).

Therefore, thinking about the world does not simplify it to the extent that makes the comprehension of it accessible; on the contrary, it complicates it to the extent where the need for this very thinking arises. Thinking actually complicates the world. For all the rest, reflexes, reactions and reflection are enough, just like for any animal.

These are the general properties of the logic of mythological consciousness.

The next step in understanding the nature of

mythological consciousness is to identify the essence of mythologisation.

1. The only adequate methodological condition for comprehending the essence of mythologisation is man’s actualisation of mythological consciousness in himself as the subject of comprehension. This methodological condition is not only applicable for resolving the issue of the nature of mythological consciousness but is the universal condition and the matrix for revealing the nature of any other phenomenon in the spiritual life of people (including law) (Malakhov, 2020, pp. 13-21).
2. Mythologisation is a process that is associated with several basic intentions. These include:
  - 1) spiritual comprehension of everything through naming. Here, it would be appropriate to refer to the biblical legend of David, who tamed a lion by giving it a name. And “since myth is speech, anything of which one can speak can become a myth” (Bart, 2008, p. 28);
  - 2) interpretation of states, processes, events, tendencies, laws, deeds in the meaning framework of existing myths;
  - 3) connection (equalization) of the visible, the evident with its meaning, essence and being;
  - 4) giving untypical traits to objects, phenomena or people that bring them into a reality existing under incredible laws;
  - 5) assigning the attribute of perfection, excellence and authenticity to some condition, property or attitude (including laws or states in their reality); ascending from reality to the assumption of reality. This intention of mythologisation makes it an extremely important cultural factor even in the modern world;
  - 6) assigning the attribute of a miracle to an event, process or ability, i.e. of something that occurs accidentally, voluntarily and unconditioned, but at the same time inevitably and necessarily, as a very significant qualitative leap into the impossible as

- something quite real;
- 7) mystery (symbolical ritual contact with super-reality), when the man is taken “inside” a super-real event, thus obtaining super-natural powers himself;
  - 8) mystification of reality; transformation of a contradiction, tragedy or an accident into a higher providential plan that realises universal harmony (fusion of miracle and mystification). “The materialistic view on the world is not more “objective” than what it is opposed to. In this sense, this view is also nothing more than a myth” (Rulan, 2000, p. 244);
  - 9) distancing oneself from reality; imaginary escape from reality to see it “from the outside”, to replace it with the preferred reality;
  - 10) exaggeration of the present, as a rule, excessive, one-sided and selective, transforming this exaggerated present into an absolute reference point;
  - 11) exteriorisation of man into the world and events, and, vice versa, the interiorisation of the world into man. This produces a union with the world that does not scare but gives hope;
  - 12) introduction of a person or people to culture on an image-symbolical, associative and irrational basis;
  - 13) deification of man (in his abilities) and humanisation of God (in his manifestation);
  - 14) removal of responsibility; this is the power and the attractiveness of myth. Myth bears no hostility to man. It presents an advantageous (under certain conditions), insuperable, and not completely understood turn of events, therefore bearing a hidden mysterious meaning. The fateful, life-defining nature of mythologised events presents the way for man to reconcile with himself and his conscience. Responsibility is replaced with complete submission (resignation);

15) replacing truth with reality as a way of transforming this reality into a myth (Averintsev, 2004, p. 175);

16) resumption (actualisation, reanimation) of a past reality in a humanised, animated and spiritualised reality. Mythologisation is a regret of something that did not come true, and it is a consolation for something that turned out to be different.

17) ideology as a rational structure of values and ideas, which forms an active and spiritual intention in social life. But unlike mythology, ideology is a double symbolisation: symbolisation of myth itself and symbolization of myth as reality.

The poor consistency between separate intentions and, in some cases, their mutual contradiction can be seen. However, it is quite understandable: it is precisely this ambiguous connection between the basic intentions of mythological consciousness through which its nature is manifested, its generally controversial (even paradoxical) character.

3. The nature of mythological consciousness manifests itself best in its mechanisms, not in the contents of the meaning units it consists of.

Regardless of the aspect of life where it occurs and what myths it produces, the mechanism of mythologisation is the same. The elements, the “construction materials” of mythologisation are most various fragments of the physical reality, such as events, processes, personalities, connections, properties etc. The “triggers” of mythologisation are creative imagination, fear of the unknown and the unexplainable and purely impractical inquisitiveness (keenness for understanding), human curiosity.

As a process, the mechanism of mythologisation is as follows: first, the visible is assigned meaning and is symbolised; next, the symbolized is returned as a hidden meaning of the visible, as an incarnation of the meaning generated by the meaning. Finally, a con-

nection between the newly visible and the initial visible is established, transforming the effect into the cause and the cause into the effect.

4. In its initial form, mythological consciousness was self-sufficient, requiring neither credibility test nor limitations. It was a natural and actual part of the social consciousness in early societies. Nevertheless, along with that, starting from the modern era, due to fundamental changes in social consciousness and the enhancement of the influence and effect of other forms of consciousness, primarily the scientific, the ability and the need for mythologisation, immanent to human consciousness, began to acquire certain limits in the demythologisation mechanism.

However, it is essential to remember that as one of the initial forms of social consciousness, mythological consciousness contained the seeds of all these diverse forms that were revealed gradually throughout history. All the forms of social consciousness have a genetic connection with mythological consciousness. From this point of view, demythologisation as such is not the denial or overcoming of myths, but the denial and overcoming of mythologisation extremities, which include, for instance, ideology, the “foremother” of social consciousness manipulation with no moral, religious or legal limits.

#### Concentration Points of Mythological Consciousness

The “products” of mythological consciousness are myths. The term *myth* refers to many interconnected but quite independent notions; therefore, it is impossible and improper to attempt to formulate a compressed and universal definition of myth. It is only necessary and possible to determine the meaning framework for understanding this phenomenon.

Of course, we do not aim to reveal all the possible meanings that may be associated with the

idea of myth and that are packed into the term *myth*. Moreover, many of these meanings are principally open. Reference to myth as such provides almost an endless prospect for understanding and reproducing it in completely different conceptual variations.

In view of this, it is enough to consider the following characteristic features of the phenomenon of myth.

First, myth does not exist outside the mythologisation process. Separate from it, myth becomes just a fairy tale, a fable, a mind play, a product of fantasy. However, myth is far from being just a fable, a metaphor etc. These are simply some of the forms of existence and expression of myths. At the same time, a separate myth is unchangeable, quite definite, and open to changes (cultural variations), i.e. under-defined. Therefore, the characteristics of myth itself and the features of mythologisation are basically the same.

Second, myth does not only mean guessing about reality but bringing reality to the syncretic level. This is the essence of myth, the best way to describe its nature. Myth has a holistic worldview, not broken into fragments for analysis, regardless of how much this integrity is manifested and articulated in a given myth. Outside myth, everything appears as an infinite and disconnected diversity that cannot be brought together by means of reasoning, that can only be handled by imagination and intuition.

Thirdly, being a worldview, myth is self-sufficient, i.e. the world it expresses exists in complete harmony with the myth itself.

Fourth, myth contains not just a hidden but a secret meaning, which always appears to be much more profound than it initially seems, no matter how deep we look inside. In other words, the meanings of myth are unlimited, or, to be more precise, the only limit is the capacity of one’s imagination.

Fifth, mythologisation is a continuous process of building myths on top of other myths, making it absolutely impossible and pointless to find the



beginning, the origin of a given myth.

Myth never appears out of nowhere in an empty place that has not been occupied by other myths before. It would be impossible to find any other sources of myth, and mythological consciousness does not require that.

Sixth, the reality presented in a myth is neither true nor false. "Testing" whether a myth is true is a sure way to destroy the myth, to ruin its meaning. "One has to be extremely short-sighted in science... not to notice that myth is (of course, for mythological consciousness) the most concrete and supremely intense reality" (Losev, 1991, p. 24).

Evidence (proof) is incompatible with myths. When there is evidence, myth dies.

Seventh, concerning reality, myth is a prejudice, in its philosophical and not in the sententious or ordinary sense, as it stands before reason, being the perception of the real before its comprehension.

Myths are not forms of mythological consciousness but their content. The obviousness of reality in myth is not ensured through comparison with actual reality, as it is done in scientific research. Myth relies on concentration points, or units of meaning, specific to mythological consciousness.

Such concentration points of the meanings embedded in myths are mythologemes, archetypes and mentality. In myths, they acquire a definite content and forms of expression that are specific to mythological consciousness. They are the "material" for constructing myths: mythologemes are the bricks, archetypes are the cement, and mentality is the general "building layout".

The paradox of myths is that it is impossible to understand anything in them without already understanding it (Malakhov, 2020). Myths are not understood, and they need to be understood, but this understanding (pre-understanding) is already there; without pre-understanding, understanding is impossible.

This pre-understanding is encoded and embedded in mythologemes. There is a multitude of

such mythologemes in every myth. Many myths are vague. Many mythologemes are much more limited in comparison. Every spiritual culture develops its own set of mythologemes. We could draw a parallel between the relation of sets of mythologemes to the number of myths and the relation of the number of letters in an alphabet to the vocabulary of a language.

Some myths differ from each other in their combination of mythologemes. The point of the myths is the infinity of interpretations.

A mythologeme may be presented as a concept. However, unlike theoretical concepts that are differentiated integrity of meanings, each of which has an independent meaning of its own and allows a notion to be ultimately definite in a specific aspect, a mythologeme is a concept that is characterised by a syncretism of meanings that bear no independent meaning on their own; it is the form of syncretism. Moreover, every mythologeme, taken in its isolation, only distorts the understanding of a myth as a construct made from ideas and images.

Mythologemes are allegorical in nature. One and the same object of reality may be associated with different mythologemes. Mythologemes are not "enslaved" by concreteness.

It is important to keep in mind that both myths existing in ancient societies and modern myths have the same meaning foundation, i.e., they rely on common mythologemes. Today, we cannot speak of myth and mythologisation referring to the entire scope of their meanings and interpreting them in the same way as we interpret ancient texts or the so-called primitive consciousness of the present, but still *primaeval* (in lifestyle and living conditions) communities. Some mythologemes have not lost their relevance and power, while others have receded into the background or become irrelevant.

Mythologemes give the desired access to the complexities of the world and existence in itself. This is possible because in mythologemes the essence, law and nature of things coincide with their appearance. The depth lies on the surface.

Mythologemes make the world that is complicated by human thinking suitable for being in it.

In the myth theory, mythologeme is usually understood as the moment of archetype actualization. Archetypes, but not objects or other components of reality such as processes or relations, are the ways and the grounds for tying mythologemes into a particular configuration, integrity, which appears as a myth. An archetype is a structure of a certain aggregation of mythologemes.

As concepts, mythologeme and archetype are opposites, but this opposition is not in form or logic, if not in content. This means, among other things, that it is impossible to understand an archetype by understanding the essence of a mythologeme and vice versa, regardless of their common mythological nature; they are concentration points of mythological consciousness that can function in mythological consciousness independently.

There are two basic meanings of the concept (and idea) of an archetype. The first, predominant, classical, and habitual one is the one presented by Jung: an archetype is understood as a psychological phenomenon “living” in the subconscious or, particularly, in the collective unconscious.

Such psychological entities have no form. However, as the adherents of Freudianism believe, when they are exposed to a special technique of “extracting” from the subconscious into comprehension using information with a specific connotation (emotions, associations), they can find a symbolic or, as the ultimate dream, a verbal form. Such symbols-archetypes do have forms, and these forms are the forms of social consciousness.

Archetypes of this kind (this is the second basic meaning of this concept), although they are derivatives of archetypes of the first kind, are nevertheless quite independent. This paper focuses on these particular archetypes.

This archetype includes spiritual entities bearing profound ideas that determine the mindsets for comprehending any aspect of social life.

The archetype reveals itself (comes to the surface of consciousness) as an elementary and fundamental act of spirituality (similar to a regulation in a legal system), the only bearers of which are intuition and image.

The mechanism of mythologisation is the transition of the first type archetypes into the second type archetypes.

The connection between archetypes is voluntary. An archetype is an uncontrollable and voluntary act of spiritual reproduction that may manifest itself in an image and an image of some existing relations. On its own, an image is an act of spirituality generated by intuition.

An archetype is a concept that refers to universal images existing in the human subconscious with a specific axiological intention and a regulatory ability. The experience of an archetype is the effect it can produce.

Archetypes cement social consciousness not as a reflection of social life but as its product, its creature.

An archetype may be a tool for thinking about the world. It always brings understanding and interpretation (explication, disenchantment) to the sacral level, to the level of the supposed otherness that reveals itself not in experience, but in a spiritual act, when the sensation, the awareness of submerging into this otherness disappears, which is, however, the condition and the ground for human existence.

The experience of law from the point of view of its emergence (the archetype of law) is always sacralised.

Archetypes are nodal points of mental structures. As archetypes, the mentality is a civilization-generated product of the collective subconscious (pre-conscious, fore-conscious), not the individual. It characterizes the entire ethnos together, but nobody in particular.

Similar to the concept of the archetype, the concept of mentality has two independent meanings. In one sense, the mentality is a biogenetic (general psychological) phenomenon; in the other, it is a cultural phenomenon.

In the context of mythological consciousness, the second interpretation of mentality appears more relevant. As one of the concentration points of mythological consciousness, the mentality is the logic and architectonics of archetypes belonging to a given culture.

The mentality is a spiritual fact, inaccessible to reflection. It is a sort of a stream of spirituality, spiritual energy that disappears in the act of reflection, transforming into ideas. Once contained within ideas, mental clusters can find some forms and ways of expression, but, firstly, such forms can cover only the most superficial stratum of the mental; secondly, they can never express the mental adequately. This inadequate expression of the mental is mythologisation. The mentality is the abode of myths.

Mentality contains the civilizational encoding of the world-viewing and thinking capacities of a people. It is a purely human way of spiritual and mental adaptation to the world, comprehension of the world and finding one's place in it. It dissolves man in reality (by transforming empirical existence into being), at the same time letting him feel his place and purpose in the world, stand out from the world.

At the mental level, man finds a social form of being, becomes a political, legal, moral, religious, aesthetic etc., creature (Sigalov & Sheparneva, 2017).

#### Forms of Mythological Consciousness

1. Mythological consciousness is, of course, enclosed in all the known universal forms applicable in formal and logical thinking, i.e. notions, judgments, reasoning. However, these forms do not characterize consciousness as mythological; they have no mythological nature.

The inner forms (content organization forms) characterizing mythological consciousness are ideas and values, while signs, images, and symbols are the outer ones (content expression forms). All of these forms are mythological in

nature.

In mythological consciousness, the inner and outer forms are tied together in an unusual (uncommon for the scientific and science-like thinking) way: both are equally essential, the outer forms are independent and capable of replacing the inner forms and their content.

2. *Ideas* encompass the concentrated mythicalness of the perceived (and imagination-created) world. Thinking with ideas gave rise to philosophy, bringing all basic properties of ideas, including, first of all, their self-contradiction (Malakhov, 2009), into philosophical consciousness from the mythological.

The essence and mythological nature of ideas are best revealed when compared with such other units of meaning as concepts, categories and notions.

In the times of Plato and Aristotle, ideas were expressed not within the framework of conceptual thinking but in the form of symbols and images. As abstract, "ultimate" thinking developed, its image-symbolic foundation was gradually replaced with conceptual structures equally suitable for expressing any abstract thought and the objective-empirical interpretation, verbal description of reality. The mythological foundation of abstract thought went down into the depths of the collective subconscious.

3. *Value* as a unit of meaning is, first of all, a form of mythological consciousness. Therefore, the nature of values manifests itself, and the thought of values finds adequacy only in its context.

In their original sense, values as forms of mythological consciousness must not be applied to reality, as they disappear in it. One should not seek them where they do not exist, i.e. in practical life.

However, it may be possible to guess the "echo" of what properties of values may be "heard" in such assumptions: values are a phenomenon and a form of mythological consciousness that feature duality as an immanent property. Values are dual in the sense that they may cause different (or even opposite) consequences.

They always have a downside, and achieving them is always associated with a specific price and loss. They are not ideal; the world of values is a world of complicated relations and processes; their symbol is two-faced Janus.

Values are excessive, and the human world is valuable with its excessiveness.

Value is a form of spirituality, which makes values absolute. Nevertheless, being absolute, values are the incarnation of the sacral. Otherwise, values are rationalised and inevitably become relative, losing their spirituality.

Depraving the values of their ideal and mythological character destroys them. Consumption is the mechanism of such destruction.

There is only one need that is possible and important: the need for the value itself, the need for something unconditional, complete and evident, something to fill human life with meaning. The need for value is the need for self-sustainability, a stable pivot point, meaning of life.

It is impossible to create value. Values generate themselves within mythological consciousness. It is not the man that multiplies them by multiplying his goals, but vice versa. They are primary to man as the carrier of mythological consciousness. In value, there is no element that we refer to as the purpose; they are purposeless and self-sufficient.

Value is anything that man (or society) agrees to serve. While everything that serves man has its price or relevance, i.e. it can satisfy his needs etc. (Lanovaya, 2014). That which has a price satisfies man. However, it is also important for the man to satisfy the value, be aligned with it, equal to it, be worthy of it, etc. Recognising and obtaining values is the ability to become them, not to control and use them.

Values cannot be utilized, i.e. defiled, profaned. Some things cannot be “plucked” like a flower without destroying them; they can only be admired. “Admiration” of values is too exotic and strange for modern man, but this is precisely what lets him be a man. “A man is an effort of being a man” (M. K. Mamardashvili), and this

effort lies in the ability to be that “impractical” towards values.

Values are the “palette” of mythological consciousness, which colours the world, ending its achromaticity.

4. If values are the content of the humanised world, belonging and understandable only to man, *symbols* are their direct form.

Symbols are forms of the humanised appearance of reality to mythological consciousness, not the phenomena themselves; therefore, the reality is not the essence of symbols. Phenomena are symbolic, and essence is real. In this self-evidence (appearance) of mythological consciousness, we see the roots of Plato’s philosophic idealism. B. Russell was correct in asserting that the entire Western European philosophy is just a commentary on Plato; he was right because the phenomenon of philosophy has only one source, which is mythological consciousness, or a collection of archaic myths.

Symbols do not follow reality, but reality follows symbols. Consciousness as a whole is an expression of reality in symbols, i.e. the expression of the actual (material) in the ideal. Without symbols, the only possible thing is simple, meaningless, empty, looking around oneself.

The symbol, so to say, replicates singularity, first, by making it reproducible, second, by using its meaningfulness (instructiveness) for everyone, and third, by standardising it.

Through symbol, singularity acquires constancy and liberates itself from temporariness and finitude.

Due to symbols, reality manifests itself as a totality of meanings; these meanings themselves are reality “folded” in symbols. Symbol grasps meaning in reality, while the meaning, discharging itself in the objective reality, generates symbols.

This relation between symbols and meanings has different historical and cultural variations. As an illustration, in the culture of Antiquity, the symbolic form and its meaning were not separated yet and were seen as equality; for this reason,

the revealing of meanings was not a result of intellectual labour (comprehension), but a result of their evidence, accessibility to live contemplation. The symbol both coincided with the object and made it independent.

In the Middle Ages, “an important step was made to recognize the specificity of symbol and myth as tools for expressing meaning that cannot be accommodated in the rational and discursive thesis” (Averintsev, 2004, p. 152), i.e. there was a gap between meaning and symbol, the elimination of which (return to the evident) was seen in a reflective act that transformed the symbol into a form of the subjectivity of man’s relationship to the world. A symbol as the obviousness of meaning turned into an allegory, meanings coincided with things and, as such, found their incarnation in myths.

Myth is always an indistinguishable unity of events inherent to the sensually perceived reality and symbolism. The content of the myth is coded in symbols.

However, despite this unity, symbols are not tied to reality, and they are not the Platonic shadows that spoke of. They may be interpreted in very different ways, and there is always complete freedom of imagination. A symbol cannot be interpreted as right or wrong, at least because symbols are not units of cognition. The actual purpose of referring to a symbol is to interpret (understand) the symbol, not to comprehend whatever may be behind it. ‘The symbol is the only possibility of describing what we can experience but cannot name precisely’ (Pomerantz, 2017, p. 23).

By taking part in the interpretation of a symbol, man achieves thereby an unusual spiritual state, namely pure creativity and self-development, self-unfolding in the world.

Myths determine someone’s pertinence to a particular culture, and culture is a symbolism of a human being.

The destruction of mythological consciousness happening today is related, first of all, to the destruction of social symbolism. The mild form

of the destruction is demythologisation, a process in which the stated unity of a symbol and its content is destroyed by rejecting the symbolic component of a myth and the absolutisation of its content. Beyond this process, cognition is impossible. It can be said that the development of scientific cognition is inseparably and historically linked with the demythologisation of reality.

The process related to another aspect in the destruction of this unity, i.e. rejecting the content of myth, causes the absolutisation of its symbolism. In this condition, ‘the symbol of a thing is its law’ (Losev, 1991, p. 258), the meaning that finds the form of an idea. There is always a seed of symbolism in ideas, and symbols always have the potential of ideas. The return to the organic unity of symbol and content in myth is always possible, and it is often difficult to avoid it.

The development and shaping of ideas (idea-based structure of thinking) is the essence of philosophising, although it is not related to the demythologisation of symbolism. Consistent scientificity is always non-mythological (demythologised); consistent philosophising is always mythological.

5. Where meanings acquire the form of ideas, symbols acquire the form of images.

An *image* provides a visual representation of a symbol. Nevertheless, as a form of mythological consciousness, it cannot be limited to the visual presentation of symbols; otherwise, the images become independent and self-sufficient forms. In fact, a symbol and an image are impossible without each other, and they exist in dialectic relation with each other. Mythological consciousness is based on the dialectic of images and symbols; a myth actually expresses the symbolic reality in images. Ideas create this symbolic reality.

The dialectic of image and symbol is the following: a symbol is an abstraction of an image; the image is the tangible particularity of the symbol; the image is the outer form of the symbol, its visibility; the symbol is the inner form of an idea, and the meanings of the ideas are values.

A system of symbolic images grows out of archetypes; archetypes are combinations of symbols synthesized in an image. An image is a syncretism of a symbol combination.

6. The expressiveness of a symbol is incarnated in a *sign*. A sign is also the external form of a thing, similar to a sensually perceivable phenomenon; however, it expresses not the essence, but the meaning, contributed by the symbol of the thing. The thing is one, but it may carry several meanings; for this reason, a sign does not reveal this meaning on its own, but only points to it.

A sign is a form of “contact” of a symbol with a thing or an event, turning them into a foreshadowing of something. It presents the future of a thing or an event as their future fate, where necessity and voluntariness are not separated. A sign is a form of feeling the fate of a thing, and it is a presentiment that takes over man. In this sense, signs are a mythological form of expressing the determinism of phenomena, but not just a form of dependence of one phenomenon on the other; it is a form of awareness of the universal significance of one phenomenon to the other.

7. A totality of signs is a reality, parallel to the real, physically perceived world, compared to which the tangible reality feels unreal, transformed (like a pumpkin turned into a carriage in the famous fairy tale), conditional to the point of illusiveness, created, existing before time. Such aggregations of signs are language, law, morals, religion and many other components of the social being of people.

#### Conclusion

Mythological consciousness is not an aggregation of myths, but quite an independent way of a spiritual penetration into the world, a way of transforming it into an inseparable, sometimes even indistinguishable, unity of the tangible, sensually perceivable reality and the sign-symbolic reality.

Since mythological consciousness is a form of social consciousness, anything can take forms

that characterize it. Even though mythological consciousness had an integrating power in pre-modern times, and today it is fragmentary, it has always been and remains an integral part of the spiritual life of society.

Mythological consciousness changes throughout history, not in its essence but in its content (myths).

Forms of mythological consciousness cannot be used as tools for comprehending the modern world. If the modern post-classics grows from denying and rejecting classical rational thinking as obsolete, what could we say about the long-gone times when the entire world was a myth?

Mythologisation is a particular attitude of social consciousness towards the reality of things and ideas, which is different, on the one hand, from criticism and denial, and on the other, from apologetics.

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