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**ROLE OF MYTHOLOGIZATION AND PERSONIFICATION OF
THE IMAGE AND ITS SYMBOLIC NATURE**

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Abstract

Relevance of the topic of myth in ritual practices of the Circassian (Adyg) is in their conceptually new perception in modern culture. Mythology and personification of Pantheon deities and protectors covers the semantic and translational levels in cooperation with the representation and structure of ritual activities. The paper deals with the reconstruction and reinterpretation in the ancient Circassian (Adyg) mythological system followed by identification of similar rituals, issues of plot borrowing, as well as disclosure of symbols in the interaction with the archetypal mythological structure and musical insonation in ritual via instrumental tunes or songs in honour of deity. The musical instrument in the rite was an Adyg pipe called Kamil that has a sacred power of divine origin and a border between the human ancestor and deities. Currently reinterpretation of archetypal mythological structures, plots, characters and images lead to a new worldview in mythology. It gives them the second life as a phenomenon of contemporary culture from the viewpoint of archaic mythological representation of images and symbols. Common feature of archaic cultural levels is a single system of transmission, awareness about sacred ritual and sounds to achieve necessary benefits for the existence and development of the mankind in the world.

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Keywords: Myth, deity, rites de passage, ritual play, ritual dance, udzh (dance).



1. Introduction

Convergence of new worldview with the past seems to be deeply symptomatic and relevant. French philosopher and philologist R. Barthes proclaimed a theory that “modernity is a privileged field for mythologizing” (Meletinsky, 2001). Currently it creates new perspectives related to mythological consciousness and archaic myth elements, including imagery, archetypicalness, rituality, symbolism for researchers of contemporary culture.

2. Problem Statement

Current integrative trends have just taken awareness of the world and archaic music in cultural, semiotic and anthropological theories in philosophical, cultural and ethnomusicological studies. It has become universal with a wide range of new, currently actualized meanings and codes in “expanding immensity of space”..

3. Research Questions

The subject of research is the sound design through instrumental playing, song and dance.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify archaic myth elements in ritual practice by the example of representative rites, as well as ancient samples of Circassian (Adyg) musical tradition in insonation for rite / ritual

5. Research Methods

The methodology of the study is an interdisciplinary approach, involving multidimensional synthesis of philosophical, sociological, anthropological and cultural methods, as well as theoretical, empirical, interpretative and descriptive analyses developed in the works of Robertson (1927), Jung (1996), Bierlein (1997), Malinowski (1998), Gennep (1999), Meletinsky (2001), Barthes (2008), Eliade (2017) and many other authors.

6. Findings

Modern musical culture is conceptually connected with the idea of myth and it has very deep roots and traditions. Primarily, it is necessary to understand the nature of myth while considering the issue of mythologization and direct connection between music and myth. E. M. Meletinsky said: “Myth is a way to conceptualize the world that is around and inside a person” (Meletinsky, 2001). It allows understanding the deep origins of modern cultural processes in combination with the pragmatic function of mythical time. In this regard, it is necessary to recreate several archaic rites / rituals in modern interpretation and consider them as a means of cultural renewal. Reinterpretation (the term of Nossrat Peseschkian) of ancient mythological system allows revealing similar rites, to resolve the issue of plot borrowing and to disclose

characters and images in interaction with the archetypal mythological structure and musical insonation in the ritual. Thus, we can obtain many characteristics of the one that will let us build a single system with the determined role of deity, musical voicing in the concepts of myth.

While considering the problems in the reconstruction of rites, we need to emphasize that “the integrity of forgotten time is restored through repeating the myths and consequently a person becomes an “accessory” to referred events or contemporary of gods or heroes” (Eliade, 2017).

What does the term “myth” mean within this context? On the one hand, modern sociology defines the term “myth” as “illusion, lie, propaganda” (Meletinsky, 2001). On the other hand, it is a combination of known sacred values and knowledge that have reached us to a certain extent as a theory of primitive religion, combining fantastic and unreal stuff with dogmatic thinking. Myth was the origin of cultural Genesis and now it is the foundation of many existential, cultural and social practices that express primary experience of consciousness in the immediate reality, integrity, syncretism and unity with the world (Galanina, 2013). However, we shall not forget that researchers correlate the “myth” with the worldview in combination with a certain type of thinking (Meletinsky, 2001).

Mythologizing and representativeness of traditional musical culture of the Circassians (Adygs) helps to consider the two most archaic ceremonies. These are “Psyheg’e” (Crying over the water, Ritual to search the soul of drowned) (Gucheva, 2017) and “Shchyble udzh” (Rite and ritual song and dance in honor of Shchyble that is the God of thunder and lightning) (Gucheva, 2018). These actions show the appeal to chthonic deity, Psyh’ue Guashche (goddess of river water), cosmogonic gods such as Psath’e (God of soul) and Shchyble (God of thunder and lightning).

The primary basis of these rites is a myth associated with the appeal to certain forces of nature, namely, to the deity for positive outcome, well-being and security guarantees for a certain mythological time. There are rituals different in implementation, but with common goal in a study. They have different plot and semantic structure revealed in a kind of triad to initiate appeal: “subject” – “recipient” – “object” (Z. M. Naloev). In the first case, the “subject” is an instrumental tune of the same rite called “Psyheg’e”, through which people appealed to deity (“recipient”) and the “object” is a man, for whom the ceremony is held. “Shchyble udzh” has similar triad, except that the ritual “Udzh” dance becomes a “subject”. Speaking about the structure of these rites, we can reveal it based on the analysis of these components. The rite is like a peculiar system, where each component is responsible for its own level, semantic and contextual development according to three-phase scheme named *rites de passage*, substantiated by Arnold van Gennep (Gennep, 1999). In addition to the triad, we can distinguish several semantic levels. First, we outline A level (Kamilyapsha performing a ritual tune to appeal) to articulate coordinates of the rite such as upper world, lower world and ritual space binding them. As we said above, the binding ritual space can be a ceremonial tune or dance. The second B level (Psyh’ue Guashche is the ritual’s patron and goddess of waters and Psath’e is God of souls) is connected directly to deity and developed according to its own canons. It provides a three-part structure that includes: through the force of ritualized words, man appeals and explains the request to deity; in fact, this is appeal and designation of its result; consolidation and approval whatever the result is. Man is grateful that he is allowed to refer to deity and any outcome will have been adopted as necessity. The third C level (event that led to appeal to patron) is very interesting, as it is the event which triggers the appeal to deity.

The complex of mythical conception about life and death in “Psyheg’e” ritual is joined into a single point as in any other situation, but at the same time it’s the “line that connects the beginning of the man’s way with *vertex* (there is the meaning of the upper world) that is a terrestrial way as part of infinity” (Thagazitov, 2006).

Our previous studies (Gucheva, 2017; Gucheva, 2018) reveal that all elements of the triad are unified, where each has its own structural features of implementation and development but despite this, all ritual constituent elements are equal and interrelated. The appeal is carried out, in the first case, by means of instrumental playing and through ritual *udzh* dance in the second case. Analyzing the semantics of “Psyheg’e” song to the same ritual, we can say that it is the main link between the world of deities and the human world. The sound of the ritual makes a connection between the upper world and the world of man. Kamil melody carried not only the meaning of appeal to deity but sound violation in the ritual determined completion and distinction between rituals of the whole. It held the main idea of rite. It was an appeal to deity and response to a person’s request. This was the kind of dialogue with elements of nature and God for the transition of deceased soul to infinity through music and words.

Appeal to deity was carried through dance and it had its own peculiarities for implementation in “Shchyble *udzh*” ceremony to honor God of thunder and lightning. We can distinguish several levels in semantics of the specified ritual: a mythic model of Shchyble image, funeral rites, ritual sacrifice, feast, “Udzh” dance and songs in honor of deity. As we wrote above, each semantic level has general principles of realization, interaction and development, according to the three-phase scheme named *rites de passage*.

Thus, semantics in “Psyheg’e” and “Shchyble *udzh*” is concentrated precisely on the myth and “if the image of thought, presented in the myth, has no reflection in the ritual, then it has not truly religious value. Apart from the ritual, myth is only doubtful and unreliable evidence” (Robertson, 1927).

Having considered the above structural mythological organizations, we can clearly say that rituals to appeal to deity of any value in the Pantheon had a similar structural and semantic fullness. These were regressive semiotic system, where myth and deity had independent semiotic complex that could not exist outside the ritual. But at the same time, instrumental playing and dancing out of the ritual lose “service functions” and become the phenomena of art and traditional culture. Through conceptual side of these rites, we can reconstruct only the myth thus creating an artificial myth. Only some rituals from mythoepic tradition of the Circassians (Adygs) were preserved and function from archaic rituals, in which the myth is transformed into a structural and semantic model, but with new implementation, modern cultural and historical discourse according to emerging socio-historical time.

We can recall some thanatological aspects from Circassian (Adyg) mythology, where the archetype of flowering and withering of nature is reflected in “Nart” epos. One epic story reflects a version about invention of the first musical instrument called kamil, attributed to Ashemez who was one of the heroes from Nart epos. But on the other hand, there is major conceptual and ideological basis, such as life and death. According to Adyg mythology, kamil of Ashemez had white and black ends. If you blow in the white end, the world flourishes, herds and yield increase. If you blow in the black end, the land is emptied, animals die: “...The flute of Ashemez was not simple. It belonged to Thagoledzha, the God of fertility. One end was white, the other was black. The song from the white end was not like melody from the black end. Ashemez blows in the white end and life becomes blooming, abundant. But if he blew in the black

end, there would be no joy, plants would wither, it would kill people and animals” (Nart, 1974). Giving him musical instrument, gods provided this tool with qualities peculiar to them. Due to that, Nart defeated a dragon thus performing a feat. In addition to magical properties, music from the flute gains the ability to create harmony, order of existence and creation, through the concept of justice:

*Ashemez u lly ph'ashem,
Ashe i k'ueu bzh'amijapschem
I bzh'amijr k'yzek'uekh,
Gum hyh'e pshynal'er zefleschle.
Schlyr aryhheu meschkh'uantle,
Zhygher k'otlepl, meg'ag'e,
Udz g'eg'aher schkh'ueklepl'yklesch.
H'eklekh'ueklekher k'opseuzh... (Nart, 1974).*

Fair Ashemez took the flute
That gives a source of life,
He quietly sang his happy,
And soulful tune.
He plays the flute,
The land comes to life, valleys and fields bloom,
Faces smile once again.
Birds and animals are happy, the river flows again...
(Translation from Kabardian to Russian made by V. Zvyagintseva)

The fundamental principle of death is just concentrated in cosmogonic deities such as Th'e, Shchyble and Psath'e, because image reflection, stories and philosophical concept in the myth relates to mythologizing such concepts as giving a “soul” (there is the meaning of life) and its consuming. Therefore, question of personification in Pantheon images is currently relevant. Due to semantic meaning, they are metaphorical linguistic units and similar to concepts of allegory and embodiment. We simulate allegorical and allusive image transmission through objective world of man in terms of deity image in the mythological and associative aspects in the concept of “personification”. If the deity's name reflects only its natural origin, then personification is wider concept, but at the same time it is just a primitive animation. However, in current mythological model of image, deity tends to separate from naturalistic mission of God and patron, acquiring more anthropomorphic features.

The mythology of the Circassians (Adygs) interpreted the gods' images in their own way, giving them features and functions that would respond to religious worldview and help in everyday life. These features and functions were local and temporary for man. It was associated with their transformation and adaptation of worldview. This is especially true for female Pantheon of deities and patrons. “The cult of female deity was the only constant thing with general distribution in this changing religious diversity” (Gorshunova, 2007).

The cult of female deity or “female sacred symbolism” has universal nature, but currently it remains practically unexplored in most cultures. Archaic phenomena had more complete description in folklore and ethnographic works related to the study of female deity. Monograph of A. T. Shortanov called “The adygeyan mythology” (Shortanov, 1982) alone considers not only mythological structure, but also whole adygeyan Pantheon of gods and ritual complexes partially associated with them. It absorbs main female deity such as Th’e Guashche (Mother of all gods), Psyh’ue Guashche (river goddess), Hypeh Guashche (sea goddess), Hade Guashche (goddess of gardens), Zhyg Guashche (goddess of trees), Mez Guashche (goddess of forests), Merem (mother of great God, the patron of beekeeping), etc., but out of genesis and sacralization in female deity image. Motherhood is one of universal cultural archetypes in human existence, as well as immortality that is the key code in system of upper and lower worlds. Female Pantheon of the Circassians (Adygs) is represented by bright and colorful images. Adyg folklore often mentions good goddess Merem, or Merissa, identified with the Christian Saint Mary by researchers. According to folklore, it was believed that she was the patroness of beekeeping and bees (Liulie, 1991). Merem Theshkhue yan (Merem Thashkho-yan’), Mary/Merem was the “mother of great God” in adygeyan mythology. L. Y. Liulie reported: “This Merem is Mary because she is dignified as mother of God” (Liulie, 1991). Frederic Dubois de Montpereux, who visited Caucasus in XIX century, considered her as patroness of bees and gave the legend about Merem ascension or Merissa in another edition. One day, when “all bees died, one of them was sheltered in the sleeve of goddess. All living bees came from that survived bee” (Montpereux, 1974). People perform hymns, songs and hold ceremonies in her honor to cry out to Merem with a request for sending them happiness, health and abundance. The Circassians claim that this holiday is established in days, when Christianity dominated in Circassia to honor mother of Christ! (Bell, 1974). It is necessary to recall the semantics that refers to mythological meaning, where bees, birds, etc. are heralds of another world.

Another important detail complementing the correlation semantic image in motherhood is appearance of goddesses. In addition to mythological characteristics, they are granted with incredible female beauty that people sang about in appeals to honor them. Vivid description of Merem appearance is found in hymn in her honor:

“Your long flowing clothes are shining like silver,
You are mistress of heaven and patroness of young maidens.
Oh, bless us with a rich harvest,
Send down peace and happiness” (Bell, 1974).

Psyho-Guashi had “an appearance of beautiful women combing their hair. If you get frightened at a meeting with them, you will get sick and if you are not, their harmful action will not affect. They can love and have secret relationship with the mortal” (Lavrov, 2009).

7. Conclusion

Thus, no matter which different research positions we used to understand the myth essence, worldview of sacred pattern and mythological image of deities and patrons, we can note its stable nature in culture. It can be perceived as an event, a ritual, an action, a symbol, an archetype, a language and more. On the other hand, we can identify immanent structural elements of their presence in life of modern society

bearing the most important constitutive burden of tradition and culture. As for the specifics to perceive deities, L.F. Losev connects it with “universal animation” or mythology, that is the understanding of all inanimate as animate and unrelated as closely related” (Losev, 1991). According to J. Bierlein, “life and present days are full of mythological symbols, meanings and language” (Bierlein, 1997). Mythological concept to build deity image includes several interrelated semantic elements. First of all, this is due to the fact that this mythological image has a process of construction. It includes rituals and ceremonies with a certain semantic content, symbols, attributes, etc. Another important factor is identity of deity image with unique crystallized divine power that it has, but without external attributes. At this stage of research, mythological consciousness and archaic myth elements, including imagery, archetype, rituality, and symbolism are only logical tools to work with specific mythological images. At the same time, there is no display of main link to appeal through music such as achievement of immortality, connecting man with the gods and acquisition of eternal life in research practice.

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