

LYUDMYLA ZAPOROZHTSEVA

Structural Units of Mass Culture Mythology:  
A Cultural Semiotic Approach





**LYUDMYLA ZAPOROZHTEVA**

Structural Units of Mass Culture Mythology:  
A Cultural Semiotic Approach



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU  
Press

Department of Semiotics, Institute of Philosophy and Semiotics, University of Tartu, Estonia

The Council of the Institute of Philosophy and Semiotics of University of Tartu has, on June 26, 2019, accepted this dissertation for the defence for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (in Semiotics and Culture Studies).

Supervisor: Andreas Ventsel, senior researcher, University of Tartu

Opponents: Kristian Bankov, Professor, Ph.D., New Bulgarian University

Evripides Zantides, Associate Professor, Ph.D.,  
Cyprus University of Technology

The thesis will be defended at the University of Tartu, Estonia, on November 25, 2019, at 16.30 in UT Council Hall, Ülikooli 18.

The publication of this dissertation has been funded by the University of Tartu ASTRA Project PER ASPERA (2014-2020.4.01.16-0027), which is financed by the (European Union) European Regional Development Fund; European Social Fund's Doctoral Studies and Internationalisation Programme DoRa (Archimedes Foundation), IUT2-44 Semiotic modelling of self-description mechanisms: Theory and applications, PRG314 Semiotic fitting as a mechanism of biocultural diversity: instability and sustainability in novel environments, SHVFI19127 Strategic Narrative as a Model for Reshaping the Security Dilemma, PHVFI16937 Semiotic analysis of discourses of e-Estonia.



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund



Investing  
in your future

ISSN 1406-6033

ISBN 978-9949-03-215-0 (print)

ISBN 978-9949-03-216-7 (pdf)

Copyright: Lyudmyla Zaporozhtseva, 2019

University of Tartu Press  
[www.tyk.ee](http://www.tyk.ee)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	7
INTRODUCTION.....	9
A. The level of elaboration of the topic .....	12
B. Research questions, object of research, and methodology .....	15
C. Limitations .....	17
D. Structure of the research .....	18
I. THE DYNAMICS OF THE RESEARCH OBJECT: THE MYTHO- LOGY OF MASS CULTURE AS AN INTEGRAL CONCEPT .....	20
1. THE FIRST APPROXIMATION: WHAT IS A MASS CULTURE? .....	20
1.1 Periodization .....	20
1.2 What is a mass culture? .....	22
1.2.1 Mass culture as a set of practices .....	23
1.2.2 Mass culture as a set of symbols and texts .....	30
1.2.3 Mass culture and semiosphere .....	36
1.3 Findings .....	43
2. MYTHOLOGICAL MIND AND SEMIOSIS .....	44
2.1. Myth as a semiotic system: background .....	44
2.1.1 Myth as a metaconcept and cultural universal .....	47
2.1.2 Myth as a translation circuit of social norms .....	51
2.1.3 Myth and the structural perspective .....	55
2.2 Mythology of mass culture: the ontology .....	62
2.3 Findings .....	66
SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS I .....	67
II. STRUCTURAL UNITS OF MASS CULTURE MYTHOLOGY .....	69
1. MYTHOLOGEMES AND MYTHEMES .....	69
1.1 Introduction of the terms .....	69
1.2 Academic elaboration of the concepts .....	72
1.3 Application .....	76
1.4 Redefinition and epistemological limitation .....	78
1.5 De-commoditization as articulation of mythological mechanism .....	82
1.6 Findings .....	87
2. THE ANATOMY OF STRUCTURAL UNITS OF MASS CULTURE MYTHOLOGY .....	87
2.1 Mythologeme of Fate .....	87
2.2 Mythologeme of Course .....	92
2.3 Mythologeme of Universe (World Tree) .....	97
2.4 Mythologeme of Catastrophe (Flood) .....	102
2.5 Mythologeme of Mother Nature .....	107
2.6 Mytheme of Transformation, Or Miracle .....	113
2.7 Mytheme of Backtracking and Mythologeme of Golden Age ....	117

2.8 Findings: the basis for the classification of mythologemes and mythemes .....	120
SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS II .....	121
III. CASE STUDIES .....	124
1. ADHERENCE OF ARCHAIC AND CONTEMPORARY MYTHOLOGY BY EXAMPLE OF UKRAINIAN MASS CULTURE. CASE OF DARTH VADER .....	124
1.1 Introduction: “Star Wars” as text and transmedial world .....	124
1.2 Darth Vader the politician in Ukrainian political context .....	127
1.3 Remediation of the traditional mythology in Vader’s political advertisement .....	131
1.3.1 Analyzing “Drawing Force Of Democracy” .....	132
1.3.2 Analyzing “The Mask Is Dropped” .....	135
1.3.3 Analyzing “Darth Vader And Salo” .....	137
1.4 Vader and resemiotization of collective memory .....	140
1.5 Interpretation .....	142
1.6 Findings .....	144
2. MYTHOLOGEME OF MOTHER NATURE AS A BRANDING TOOL .....	145
2.1 Methodology .....	146
2.2 Description of the first stage .....	146
2.2.1 Comparison of visual representation and lyrics in 2015 and 2017 .....	146
2.2.2 Semiotic square .....	151
2.3 Description of the second stage .....	155
2.3.1 Attributes and their signs in brand narrative .....	156
2.3.2 Additional attributes that can be used occasionally .....	158
2.4 Findings .....	158
CONCLUSIONS .....	161
REFERENCES .....	166
SUMMARY .....	176
SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN .....	182
CURRICULUM VITAE .....	187
ELULOOKIRJELDUS .....	190

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to start by expressing my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Andreas Ventsel for his ongoing assistance, helpful suggestions, and friendly support during our academic collaboration. Along with my supervisor, I am indebted to the two most important people in my life, my parents Dr. Galina Zaporozhtseva and Dr. Evgeny Zaporozhtsev. Not only did they encourage me and believe in me, they also gave me the opportunity to embark upon my doctoral studies in the first place.

I appreciate the contribution of all the staff at the Department of Semiotics for creating such a friendly academic environment, where I could develop my ideas. In person, I am thankful to Dr. Silvi Salupere, Professor Peeter Torop, and Professor Mihhail Lotman for their detailed feedback and comments. Above all, I appreciate all the support provided by Ulvi Urm, who was always eager to help me.

I am grateful to Prof. Kristian Bankov and Dr. Evripides Zantides for the time they dedicated to reviewing the thesis and for their comments and suggestions, which helped to make it better.

Additionally I wish to thank the Department of Philosophy and the Doctoral School of the National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy, where I commenced my long journey of doctoral studies. I am grateful to Professor Vadym Menzhulin and Dr. Taras Lyuty, who helped me to start this text and advised me to not only focus on reading, but to include myself as an observer of mass culture.

For inspiring my academic endeavors, I want to thank many of my friends and colleagues. A special acknowledgment goes to Professor Inna Golubovych and Professor Olexander Kyrylyuk for our insightful conversations on structural units of myth. I am indebted to Dr. Vitali Turenko, Dr. Mari-Liis Madisson, Michael Arbenz, Julia Zubova, Daria Arkhipova, Olga Kudajeva, Ivan Ilin, and Leonid Borisov, who helped me to see the broader context of the research object. Likewise, I wish to thank Maria Maksimova, Matthieu Bordreuil, Lucia Pflieger, and Olga Bondarenko for reminding me about importance of *l'art de vivre*. I take this opportunity also of thanking my dear colleagues from the agency Enjoy Understanding for the *semiotic breakfasts*, where my ideas on codes of culture found crystallization, and I especially thank Sasha Novikov and Julia Goidenko for supporting my academic interests. My sincere gratitude to Viktor and the whole family of Kiseljovy, Tatjana Evdokimova, p.Alexandr Aim, and St. George's Church parish, whose family support I experienced during my stay in Tartu. Independently, I would like to express my appreciation to the Tartu University Student Orchestra for helping me to structure my ideas by playing classical and modern music on Monday evenings.

Obligatory thanks to my language editors Dr. Indrek Männiste and Mr. Tyler James Bennett, as well as to Dr. Tiit Remm for helping with the translations from English into Estonian.

For the financial support, I would like to thank the Archimedes Foundation, DoRa5 Programme, and Tartu University, which made my studies, visiting academic conferences, and summer schools possible – the latter two helped me greatly to articulate and discuss my ideas.

Last but not least, my sincere appreciation to animator Mika Danelia for our collaboration to create an animated summary of this thesis.



## INTRODUCTION

In the 1950s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, McLuhan argued (2003[1964]) that technologies were becoming “external extensions” of man, which was an inevitable evolutionary step in human history similar to the origin of the alphabet at certain times. This means that contemporary man finds himself increasingly as *Homo Apertus, or opened form*<sup>1</sup> (Stupin 2011); he is more open to new changes and transformations and thus less conservative than ever before. The other side of the coin is that the technologies lead to the “self-amputation of our physical bodies” (McLuhan 1994[1964]: 55) and thus provoke a loss of inner integrity. Accordingly, human beings today are becoming ever more vulnerable in encountering the challenges of the contemporary world such as unpredictability, crisis of safety, blurred boundaries between augmented body and reality, crisis of identity, and eternal existential fears.

Starting the research from a general philosophical-anthropological premise that there exists something that unites the sameness of human beings, I pondered upon a general question: what are the universal cultural forms uniting human beings who encounter existential interrogations in diversities of cultures from synchronic and diachronic perspective? Existential interrogations include the most important questions about birth and death, life and its purpose, fears and pain, love and hope, etc. Those issues become meaningful for human beings within cultural contexts and are inseparable from them as biological organisms. This dynamics is implied in the culture itself since the dynamism is an inevitable feature of human culture in contrast to the organic world existence, which strives towards the stabilization of the environment as Juri Lotman and Boris Uspensky emphasize (1971: 158). Regardless of how far the cultural evolution continues to stretch, there are no means to overcome death and no common idea about the origin of life yet. Everyone experiences pain during his life and that instils fears, which unite all human beings. However, one of the most powerful engines resisting fears is hope, which is connected to love in everyone’s life and which gives to those meanings a new circle of life. The spiral of these issues is endless and it unfolds within a culture, at the same time at every new level, and yet it still seems to return to the same point of human bio-determination; precisely which one attempts to overcome. However, whereas it is not achieved, our natural determination is reflected in culture through sustained meanings.

The attempts to overcome nature are a central motive for the most inventions and especially for the technological development, which gains ever more pace. When we take a brief look at the economic premises of the cultural development over the last three centuries, the rapid speed of shifts (in comparison to the dynamics of inventions throughout the whole history of mankind) is evident.

---

<sup>1</sup> In a sense, Stupin continues Nietzsche’s idea about human being as an open project.

The First Industrial Revolution<sup>2</sup> technified production via exploiting steam and water (since ca.1760–1840)<sup>3</sup>. The Second Industrial Revolution launched the era of mass production that was marked with the division of labour and the use of electric power (since 1870). In addition, the inventions of Herman Hollerith (the tabulating machine, 1890), Mikhail Bonch-Bruevich (flip-flop, 1918), Captain Richards & A.H. Reffell (the first robot-android Eric, 1928), as well as many other inventors during the first decades of the 20th century period, changed the world drastically for ever and prepared a ground for the next step: The Third Industrial Revolution. The Third, or the Digital Revolution, computerized the production of fast moving consumer goods: vehicles, buildings, medications and many other things, by applying information technology and electronics (1960s – onwards). Eventually, it changed our interaction with the world, our roles in the world (since the invention of androids) so as it changed our perception of this world as an ecosystem. As the World Economic Forum 2016 proved, we are on the threshold of the Fourth Industrial Revolution built upon the Third one. It will be characterized by a confluence of technologies and diffusion of boundaries between the physical, digital, and biological spheres. Schwab (2016: 3–4) argues that despite Artificial Intelligence, robotics, Internet of Things, 3D printing, autonomous vehicles, nanotechnology, biotechnology, materials science, energy storage and quantum computing are becoming at play now, the Fourth Industrial Revolution will be in any case human-centred and empowering rather than divisive and dehumanizing, as it is “not only changing the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of doing things but also ‘who’ we are”. Evidently, these issues are reflected firstly in the history of mankind in the law of somatic human rights (a right to die (euthanasia), reproductive rights, a disposition of visceral organs, etc.).

Whereas academic community attempts to acclaim a victory over nature, mankind encounters the eternal questions every day, which inevitably derive from the nature of man himself. J.Lotman and Uspensky (1971: 159) argue that dynamism in culture is not perceived as a continual process and that is the reason why certain changes used to be perceived as different in cultures, which oppose to each other. Based on the classification of societies by economic models, history is considered as a succession of different periods, where Ancient Times are characterized by the dominant of slave-owning system, which was followed by the feudal system and so on and so forth. From another angle, the humanitarian perspective focuses on dominant human perception of the world, where the mythological mind is an expressive peculiarity of the first historical periods of mankind. Following J.Lotman and Uspensky, it is important to highlight that dividing history conventionally to historical periods based on technology (techne), it is crucial to separately consider several other phenomena, which penetrate history and culture through ages and just

---

<sup>2</sup> The term “Industry 4.0” was coined at the Hannover Fair in 2011 to describe how this will revolutionize the organization of global value chains. (Schwab 2016: 7).

<sup>3</sup> The periodization is given by Schwab (2016).

occasionally change their form. The myth is one of the central phenomena in the history of culture penetrating through different ages since it is one of the cultural forms revealing ontological basis of human existence “smoothing away natural-cultural opposition of human entity” (Meletinsky 1998: 419).

Insisting predominantly on rational mind of contemporary man, science and academic research often underestimate the mythological mind these days and treat it only as an archaic phenomenon. At the same time, the contemporaneous man, who lives in the circumstances of abovementioned mondial changes and is influenced by the reconsideration of the world as an ecosystem, is nonetheless prone to mythologize the world around him as much as his remote ancestors. That is connected to the main feature of myth as a phenomenon, which is aptly emphasized by Mosco:

A myth is alive if it continues to give meaning to human life, if it continues to represent some important part of the collective mentality of a given age, and if it continues to render socially and intellectually tolerable what would otherwise be experienced as incoherence. (2004: 29).

The myth has acquired many new dimensions and forms throughout the ages and stayed alive to this day albeit, perhaps, in some other forms than in Ancient Babylon or Ancient Greece. What has stayed the same is that mythology as an edifice always becomes noticeable when it is shared among certain cultural communities. In this research, the bearer of contemporary mythology is represented in the community of the mass culture consumers.

The mass culture emerged and developed due to the technological shifts in history of mankind, so this field of culture is determined by these technologies and accumulates the common knowledge about the world, technologies, and man. Being a kind of repository of the contemporary knowledge of the world, it is a fruitful ground in search for the contemporary mythology. Although my research interest towards this subject is extensive, I limited the framework of this research to the interrogation of semiotic aspect of mythological presence in mass culture. My choice is based on the hypothesis described in the next section.

Since there are no complete mythological systems in the traditional sense nowadays, I presume that the mass culture mythology contains, firstly, certain residual mythological elements of the past and, secondly, an inner mechanism producing new mythological forms similar to the existing ones by an ontological ground. The myth as a cultural phenomenon is continual by its nature; however, in attempting to analyze myth appearances in the mass culture, one can approach them only through discrete forms. Adopting a semiotic perspective in this case is the most efficient approach as it will give an opportunity to grasp the inner consistent structures of mythology, which in turn reflect the mythological thinking of the mass culture. Applying qualitative analysis, I do not claim it to be exhaustive but it can indeed give important insights for understanding universal dimensions of culture.

## A. The level of elaboration of the topic

Back in 1957 Roland Barthes began a semiotic discussion of mass culture “mythologies” in his book *Mythologies* 1977[1957]. He focused on the latent, hidden meanings of modern commercial texts, which reveal themselves at the secondary/connotative layer of the message. While Barthes was the first to start the discussion of mass culture myth in this formulation, the origin of this inquiry can be found in two extensive domains; the long-standing academic field of myth studies and mass culture studies established only in the 20th century. In the following, I give a short overview of the academic works that are important in the context of my research focus and theoretical framework.

*Studies of myth.* Ethnography, ethnology, literature studies, philosophy, psychology, religious studies, and cultural anthropology have been discussing myth for a long time zooming in on its different modes. Deriving from the philosophical studies of mythological thinking by Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling (1989[1842]), an extensive academic discussion continued with many prominent researchers. For example, the semiotic approach to myth can be found already in the works of Ukrainian linguist Oleksandr Potebnya (1989[1862]). However, the foundational contribution to anthropological research on traditional mythological systems only emerged later by Bronislaw Malinowski, Georges Dumézil and Claude Lévi-Straus who demonstrated a structuralist approach to the classification of ancient texts. Despite the fact that Malinowski’s and Dumézil’s works are considered paradigmatic in myth studies, in this research I mostly focus on the studies of Lévi-Strauss (1963[1958], 2000[1964], 2007 [1971], 2005[1978]) who, among other issues, inaugurated a discussion upon smallest structural units of myth which I examine in Chapter II.

In the first half of the 20th century, the works of Ernst Cassirer (1955[1923–29]), Aleksei Losev (1991[1930]), Carl Gustav Jung and Carl Kerényi (1996[1941]) presented an elaboration of ideas of the mythological mind, which provided great insights to the focal object of my research. I will discuss those and other studies regarding the mythological mind in chapter 2.1.1 *Myth as a metaconcept and cultural universal*.

Eventually, the semiotic approach to myth segregated in the middle of the 20th century in which the input of the Tartu-Moscow school should be specially emphasized. The prominent research of myth by Vyacheslav Ivanov, Vladimir Toporov (Ivanov and Toporov (1965, 1974), Toporov (2010 [1967, 1973]), Ivanov (2009[1969], 1998[1978])), Juri Lotman and Boris Uspensky (J.Lotman and Uspensky (1973), J.Lotman (1985)), Eleazar Meletinsky (1976a, 1976b, 1990), Merab Mamardashvili and Alexander Piatigorsky (1997), Sergey Nekliudov (2005) kept elaborating semiotic aspects of myth with regard to the general issues of mythological thinking and the inner structure of myth. A special mentioning should be given to the contribution of Algirdas Julien Greimas (1966, 2004[1966]) who, by continuing Vladimir Propp’s narrative approach (1928), built a bridge between ancient and modern texts and demonstrated that there are indeed universal means of analysis applicable to contemporary

narratives. I focus on these issues in Chapter 2.1.3 *Myth and the structural perspective*.

In addition, several important insights on mass culture mythology can be found in more general studies of myth regarding, for example, its social aspects by well-known research of Mircea Eliade (1959) and more recent studies of Leszek Kolakowski (1989[1972]), Andrew von Hendy (2001), Vincent Mosco (2004), Galina Zubko (2012), and Devdutt Pattanaik (2006, 2013). I will analyse the influence of social aspects on mythological structures in chapter 2.1.2 *Myth as a translation circuit of social norms*.

Also, I would like to acknowledge important recent works by Ukrainian and Russian linguists and philosophers Olexander Kyrylyuk (1996, 2008, 2014), Vasilij Goran (1990), Oleksandr Polysaiev (2008, 2009), Lyudmyla Saulenko (2001), and Polish philosopher James Jakob Liszka (1989), who contributed greatly by elaborating the of inner structure of myth. I scrutinize the works on structural units of myth in Chapter II. *Structural units of mass culture mythology*.

Admittedly, the list of the researchers and their works here is non-exclusive; I mention only a few and will discuss them in depth in the subchapter *Mythological mind and semiosis* of Chapter I.

*Mass culture studies*. The framework for examining the context of structural units of mass culture mythology is based on general socio-anthropological studies of mass society which started in the beginning of the 20th century. Several important insights on the general idea about new mass culture practices and social shifts can be found in the works of the Frankfurt School representatives (José Ortega y Gasset (1991[1929–1930]), Max Horkheimer, and Theodor Adorno 1972[1944]). More recent works by Guy Debord 1994[1967], Jean Baudrillard (1996[1968], 1998[1970]), Umberto Eco (1962, 2005[1979]), Fredric Jameson (1992) Roberta Sassatelli (2007), and Helena Grinshpun (2014) provide useful insights on symbolic, performative/carnival aspect of contemporary culture, its rituals and their meanings for contemporary human beings. I examine them thoroughly in Chapter 1. Subchapter 1. *The First approximation: what is a mass culture?* and discuss further the de-commoditization as an articulation of mythological mechanism.

There is also fundamental research by Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, and other prominent researchers, who have also contributed to mass culture studies in the 20th century, which is beyond my discussion as less relevant for my research object.

All this extensive research on mass culture can be classified by schools. By way of drawing an analogy between *culture* vs. *cultural* studies, all these schools can be divided into two main two groups; the first ventured studies of mass culture with regard to socio-political aspect and postcolonial studies (*mass cultural studies*), and the second focused predominantly on humanitarian aspects of mass culture having its origin in literature studies (*mass culture studies*). While this research is situated on the intersection of those two fields, I

still use the term *mass culture mythology* in order to emphasize the wider aspect of this issue.

*Studies of mass culture mythology.* Last but not least, the studies of myth in mass culture specifically began with the works of Barthes and successfully continued with the works in marketing semiotics by Jean-Marie Floch (2001 [1990]), research on myths of soviet mass culture by Lyudmyla Saulenko (2001), semiotic studies of mass culture by Marcel Danesi (2008), Laura Oswald (2012), and Shelly Carmen Colette (2012) and several others.

Furthermore, discussions on mass culture mythology are often included within a more extended circle of issues of economic, political, ideological, and consumer culture research. It has been discussed in regard to symbolic aspects of brands in mass culture by Douglas B. Holt (2003), Mark Gottdiener, and Alexandros Ph. Lagopoulos (1985), in contemporary mythology of beauty by Naomi Wolf (2002[1990]), in visual semiotics by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2006), and also in the contexts of political myth by Christopher Flood (2001) and in anthropological research on Lenin's body representations by Alexei Yurchak (2015), in case studies of contemporary mass culture texts and practices by David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green (2003), David Buckingham (2007), Harriet Salem (2013), John Scheid, Sven Ortoli (2015), et al. I will focus on those texts in Chapter 1 Subchapter 2. *Mythological mind and semiosis* and in the case studies chapter.

In this research, I distinguish between two main attitudes in the semiotic approaches to mass culture mythology studies; to put it tentatively, the narrative approach and symbolical approach. The first derived from the general mass culture studies and it treats myth's meaning in quite a narrow sense. According to this approach, myths are mass cultural narratives around brands, goods, mass culture events, which are partially fictional and partially real but which encircle as real narratives in order to attract the attention of consumers/audience by conveying main values of the brand (e.g. stories about Coca-Cola, Apple, Starbucks, Aveda, Facebook, and other brands). This is an ethnographic and object-focused approach.

The second attitude derives from philosophical studies of myth as a phenomenon and focuses primarily on mythological type of thinking where the product of mythological thinking is relatively unimportant. It can be regarded as a meta-conceptual approach to mass culture mythology. This approach reveals some regularity and consists of patterns of mass culture mythology and gives an opportunity to see mass culture mythological forms from a wider perspective.

My research combines both abovementioned attitudes. Two epistemological positions will provide an understanding of myth as a meta-concept, which is revealed in precise textual forms. This approach is common to structural semiotic research of myth in folkloristic and literature studies. In the first instance, myth is regarded in a narrow sense including archaic heritage of the non-literal traditions, which unfolds several much wider principles of mythological thinking. Being dissimilar to rational reasoning, the principles of

mythological mind give hints for discovering precise forms for mass culture mythology.

## **B. Research questions, object of research, and methodology**

Although a variety of studies have been devoted to myth, and quite many studies have tackled mass culture issues, a lot less attention is given to the systematization of attempts to grasp mass culture mythology, and even fewer attempts have been made to determine those markers of myth within mass culture, which could assist to reveal its inner semiotic machinery. At the same time those issues are highly relevant not only from a general philosophical, anthropological, and semiotic point of view (as these could examine universal bases, which are implicitly present in contemporaneous culture) but also from a practical point of view, as they have, for example, a genuine applicability for marketing semiotics or social communications. Drawing on these points, I set myself the following research questions.

The first is an ontological question: *What is mass culture mythology and what are its forms?* Before clarifying this question, I undertook research of different approaches to mass culture and myth, and have preliminarily chosen the most relevant ones for the further investigation. Utilizing semiotic framework as the main approach, I also made use of additional perspectives such as philosophical, anthropological and socio-cultural approaches. That assisted me in more distinct awareness about functions of myth in mass culture. Among others, I also applied the method of general cultural-historical description and the comparative analytical method.

The next step of the research answers to the epistemological question: *What specific tools could we apply to grasp mythology of mass culture?* This epistemological question helps to reveal specific mythological mechanism underlying a vast number of mass culture texts. Reflecting upon this question, I presumed that myth as a cultural universal appears in discrete forms so the very next epistemological question rose concerning mythological form: *What are structural units of mass culture mythology?* In order to answer those questions, to determine the limits of the existing approaches, as well as to specify my own position and elaborate the concept of *structural units of myth*, I apply the method of comparative analysis, description, and general philosophical methods in order to illustrate my position with several examples and interpret them.

The last step is to consider a practical research question: *How mass culture mythology reveals itself in contemporary life?* This question will help to clarify already discovered points in the dynamics of cultural forms involving case studies. I aim to scrutinize mass cultural texts of different genres (movies, songs etc.) including marketing genres such as advertising and political advertising (as a message to enhance political brand). For this purpose, I mainly apply qualitative methods in order to find meanings emerging on the border of

unpredictability of interpretations, which include the techniques of visual analysis, narrative analysis, close reading, music-semiotic analysis and discourse analysis.

In examining the issue of mass culture myth as a phenomenon, I highlight the structural units of myth as the focal object of the research, because the structural units reveal inner semiotic machinery of myth and can assist to grasp semiotic entity of mass culture mythology. By defining the research object and taking into account the wide context of the situation, I apply the multidimensional approach. Since this research reveals hitherto rather unelaborated perspective to mass culture mythology semiotics, I draw upon the research dwelling on similar or related issues of myth and its circulation within general historical, political, semiotic, linguistic and socio-philosophical theoretical frameworks. In addition, I refer to mass culture studies in order to understand the circulation of myth in contemporary cultural environment. For the construction of a relevant multidimensional model of mass culture environment, I use insights of consumer culture studies, which include marketing and economic issues, folkloristic studies, media culture studies, urban studies, and political studies.

The methodological framework I apply in this research is multidimensional and includes the following approaches:

1) Taking into account that the research concerns mythology of mass culture as a contemporary phenomenon, I predominantly analyse it from the historical perspective. For this purpose, I apply cultural and historical meta-language and other appropriate methods for describing the object; I also compare its manifestations in synchronic and diachronic time samples.

2) Treating mythology as a peculiar language of culture, I apply semiotic devices for understanding the internal structures, regularities, and meanings of this language. Consequently, structural-semiotic, conceptual and categorical frameworks are required for this purpose.

What is more, in this research I make an attempt to combine the cultural-semiotic framework of the Tartu-Moscow semiotic school with French semiotic insights, which derives from the complexity of the research object. On the one hand, the most extensive studies of mass culture in semiotics have been carried out within the French semiotic school. On the other hand, once I placed the research object into a broader cultural perspective, I felt the need to widen the research context to the semiosphere of culture that was primarily elaborated within the Tartu-Moscow semiotic school. I presume that the method of the semiosphere by J.Lotman (2005[1984]) could play the key role for understanding the inner machinery of the circulation of structural units of mass culture mythology. Besides the Tartu-Moscow school's research on the general aspects of the mythological mind, it also contributes essentially to the semiotic theory of mass culture mythology. Philosophical-anthropological and sociological perspectives are applied with a view to trace the dynamics of the research object. This is not least for the reason that the semiotic approach cannot only draw upon the structural approach but should involve also the post-structural



insights in order to see how codes, systems of codes are influenced by context, subjectivity, and ambiguity of meaning production (Oswald 2015: 15). Although I mainly focus on the structural units, I also attempt to illustrate how they interact and could be challenged by the oscillations between text and context.

3) Last but not least, I include some data of sociological and statistical research. Quantitative analysis is not used as a major approach in my research and I utilize this data only inasmuch it helps to understand different aspects of the research object within the socio-cultural environment. I intentionally try to avoid quantitative methods, because myth as a phenomenon is not a discrete object and its own peculiarity is constituted by its dialectical essence. In this manner, myth is not a quantitatively calculated entity and the most reasonable framework in approaching myth in culture is therefore qualitative research.

To sum up, the general philosophical methods assist to understand the ontology of the research object, the combination of structural and post structural semiotic approaches contribute for understanding myth within communicative relations; the philosophical-anthropological and socio-cultural outlook help to discover general values and meaning that myth brings to human being nowadays, the comprehensive multidimensional approach gives opportunity to consider conceptual sphere representing the focal research object as the integral whole, and finally, the axiological approach gives opportunities to understand how human beings form attitudes of the world through mass culture mythology.

The material for generalization of meta-concepts, the principal notions of myth and its structural units, includes examples from different dictionaries (mythological, encyclopaedic, historical, explanatory, phraseological, folkloristic); from ethnographic, ethnological, folkloristic, and anthropological studies of different researchers, and the cases collected by myself. For discussion upon precise mythologemes and mythemes, I used predominantly my own observations and a selection of world mass cultural texts collected as the source material during the research.

### **C. Limitations**

The main limitation of this research is mostly related to the specific status of myth as an inherent phenomenon of human existence. However, for this very reason, I accept the primary position of fundamental impossibility of authentic and exhaustive cognition this sort of phenomena, due to the impossibility to break the tether of our own human existentiality<sup>4</sup>. I take into account the fact that the specific research object has a peculiar dialectical tendency to escape

---

<sup>4</sup> This also for the reason that myth presumes universal adjustment of mind that is ultimately related to the absolute of human being including image and likeness of God who is non-apprehensive and that is why the projection of Him into human being is also non-apprehensive.

from the strictly rational principles of reasoning. Therefore, I use a synthesis of methods in some combinations in order to analyse it from different perspectives.

Another limitation is related to the nature of mass culture phenomenon. Taking into account, firstly, that the research is focusing primarily on myth, and, secondly, that it is impossible to cover the whole plethora of existing mass cultural texts by applying qualitative analysis, I limited myself to illustrating only certain examples from mondial mass culture of recent years. While no doubt interesting, the issues of social media reality and the circulation of the memes remained beyond the scope of this research.

Focusing on how mass culture texts interact with local mythological texts and what kinds of unpredictable meanings they can produce, the cases I highlight have been mainly taken from the examples of Slavic mythology and Ukrainian culture. While it might be considered as a narrowing the sample of materials it is nonetheless sufficient for answering the main research questions. Moreover, this limitation provides opportunities for further research, which I outline in *The Future directions* section.

## **D. Structure of the research**

The first research question concerns the ontology of the research object. *Chapter I. The dynamics of the research object: the mythology of mass culture as an integral concept* is dedicated to clarifying the essence of mass culture mythology from different perspectives and in different scales. Eventually, I venture towards a definition of mass culture mythology through several steps. In the first subchapter (*1.First approximation: What is a mass culture?*) I define the scope of the general concept of the mass culture and set an attitude, which I apply in the research (emancipatory attitude). Then, I regard the mass culture through the sociological, philosophical-anthropological and semiotic frameworks. Additionally, I draw a dividing line between the notions of mass culture and pop culture, mass media culture, and digital culture. In the second subchapter (*2.Mythological mind and semiosis*), I trace the history of the notion of myth from its narrow meaning in Ancient times to the contemporary treatment of myth as a meta-concept: as a cultural universal and a structural entity. Finally, I synthesize the acquired corpus of ideas in order to define mass culture mythology (*2.2. Mythology of mass culture: The ontology*). I define four ontological aspects of this notion and specify the possible forms that mass culture mythology deploys.

*Chapter II. Structural units of mass culture mythology* opens a discussion on the smallest units of mass culture myth. The overall aim here is to answer the second and the third research questions. In the first subchapter (*Mythologemes and mythemes*), I focus the attention on theoretical reasoning of the method of the structural units of myth. I demonstrate existing approaches, classify and generalize definitions, challenge them from the semiotic perspective, and

suggest my own approach within this framework. The second subchapter (*The anatomy of structural units of mass culture mythology*) is diachronically dedicated to the most widespread structural units of mass culture mythology.

*Chapter III. Case studies* is dedicated to the tracing structural units of myth in cultural texts of different genres. I continue the discussion on the smallest mythological units by presenting the examples of their circulation in the dynamic environment of synchronic and diachronic intersection of cultures.

# I. THE DYNAMICS OF THE RESEARCH OBJECT: THE MYTHOLOGY OF MASS CULTURE AS AN INTEGRAL CONCEPT

## 1. THE FIRST APPROXIMATION: WHAT IS A MASS CULTURE?

Consideration of the ontology of mass culture myth demands an approximation through the clarification of the context, which is an important procedure to build an appropriate model of the research object. The main question is: how should we define a mass culture? Should we define it according to the semiotic approach as a kind of assemblage of texts, a type of universal language, or a specific mode of communication? In defining mass culture and mythology below, I often use the term 'form', which is applied in this research as an appearance of some content, or an objectification of any given phenomenon.

### 1.1 Periodization

As Sokolov (2007: 291) aptly notices, "mass culture is not a culture in strict, own sense of word, it is rather the *form of cultural development* (Italics are mine – L.Z.) within circumstances of industrial civilization". That is the widest definition of mass culture, which at the same time reflects the roots of its deriving from and appearing in certain dimensions of everyday life.

For the first time, mass culture was regarded as an object to reflect upon in the 1930s by a circle of sociologists and philosophers more famously known as the Frankfurt School (e.g. Adorno, Macdonald and Horkheimer, to name only some of them). They were the very first who coined the concept of *mass culture*. The texts of the Frankfurt School introduce mass culture in connection to their critique of television and other mass media (radio, newspapers) as a consequence of these new means of communication. By the same token, mass culture was described in relation to technology of the flow-production (or mass production) and to the Second Industrial Revolution in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century from several other aspects. Ortega y Gasset (1991[1929–1930]) analyzed mass culture as a phenomenon attracting masses or crowds as distinct from elitarian art produced by the minority. While Benjamin (1996 [1936]) focused on how new technologies of production and mass distribution break an aura of the works of art, Horkheimer and Adorno (1972[1944]) were concerned with the problems of the exposure of industry of culture and the distribution of this culture by these new means of communication. What all those texts had in common, was the critique of mass culture as an anticipation of a new form of cultural development as it had no distinct boundaries yet.

Nevertheless, the socio-cultural premises of the emergence of mass culture had in fact appeared long time before. For example, Sassatelli (2007: 15) names two of them: the general growth of consumption in early modernity and the revolution in consumption in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in England. Great many goods of the same shape, colour, and configurations became available there for appropriation by a great number of people. Meaning “a form of cultural development”, mass culture emerged first in the USA but also in Western Europe as a local culture in the early 20th century. As a general trend, alongside with complication of processes of production, distribution of market relations, and growth of welfare in a large scale mass culture accompanied process of gradual and all greater selection of spare time of working people since the early 20th century. It has passed through several stages in its evolution and expanded vastly in the scale in order to become a worldwide phenomenon.

By the middle of the 20th century, mass media communication had developed drastically and had turned the world into the “global village” by as aptly formulated by McLuhan (1994[1964]). Mass culture has evolved from a vague fluid-bonding anticipation of future within the “circumstances of industrial civilization” to the specific cultural forms; namely to the common set of practices (e.g. watching TV, proposing with a diamond ring<sup>5</sup>, or shopping), to the set of symbols (celebrities like Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, rhythms of rock and roll, brand logos), and finally, to the recognizable texts of culture (movies, e.g. “Some Like It Hot” (1959), songs and brands’ narratives). Eventually, the Third industrial revolution, or the Digital Revolution brought along the shift towards post-industrial economics and globalization. Naturally, that shift has affected the whole of the cultural environment in general. As a result, by the end of the 20th century mass culture had spread extraordinarily wide in all its forms due to the rapid development of the varieties in mass communication: periodical publication, cinema, radio, television, audio- and videotape recordings. By now, it exploits all means of communication, including Internet.

There certainly are different ways of periodization of mass culture history but just to sum up one briefly I start with Macdonald’s approach (Macdonald 1956[1953]) and present it as following (adding three more stages),

- 1) Early 19<sup>th</sup> century – there are some premises of mass cultural formation;
- 2) Late 19<sup>th</sup> century – the growth of mass culture;
- 3) In the 1920–30 of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – the phenomenon of mass culture appears in its conventional understanding as a consequence of the Second Industrial Revolution;
- 4) In the 1960–70s of the 20th century – the shift towards consumer mass culture of western standard;

---

<sup>5</sup> In a 1946 advertising campaign, called “Diamonds are forever”, the diamond industry monopolist De Beer set a mass culture pattern of proposing with a diamond ring as “a true proposition”, which had never existed before. Edward Epstein dedicated a book to the main mystery of the world’s diamond industry in the 20th century (1982).

- 5) Since 1980–2000 – the golden age period of mass culture as a consequence of the Third Industrial Revolution;
- 6) Since 2000 – homogeneous global mass culture as a consequence of the Web 2.0 Revolution.

It should be noticed that this periodization surely covers mass culture in the worldwide scale only approximately. However, one should take into account that during the 20<sup>th</sup> century Soviet mass culture was also developed as an independent phenomenon, inasmuch as it was constructed by inner design of the requirements of Soviet reality and was influenced by Soviet ideology (it was constituted as different practices and ideas). For this reason, Klimova includes Soviet mass culture to the common periodization of mass culture development as a separate phenomenon (Klimova 2005). Indeed, the main difference was that Soviet mass culture was politically ideological rather than consumer-oriented culture at its core. Geldern explains that the origin of Soviet mass culture derives from the pre-Revolution times in diversity of forms such as chapbooks, fairy-tales, robber adventures, and melodramas as educational vehicles:

Small-scale theatricals dramatized the plight of the peasantry; utopian fantasy gave flesh to socialist ideals; and adventure tales made revolutionary struggle seem more exciting. [...] Conservatives communicated their values in penny newspapers, religious calendars, and a wealth of other outlets where readers could be titillated by modern vices and edified by homespun virtues. Even before the Great War broke out in 1914, Russia had a rich tradition of mixing political discourse and popular entertainment. (Geldern 1995: xiii)

At the same time the common premises, channels of delivery, and its local scope were the same in Soviet mass culture as that of Western mass culture. For these reasons, the Soviet mass culture can be treated as a mix of mass cultural forms (genres, types of texts derived from Western culture) and ideological (communist) Soviet content, or to put it in other words: an alternative project of mass culture. It is certain that mass cultural forms in post-soviet societies became more homogeneous and acquired the global features, although preserving the reminiscence of the past (e.g. the Ribbon of St. George movement, popular movies and songs, etc). Based on the stages that mass culture passed through during its evolution, it is indeed possible to settle down on its definition and eventually define the boundaries of mass culture.

## **1.2 What is a mass culture?**

I have mentioned four preliminary definitions of mass culture so far. The most general of them is a “form of cultural development within the circumstances of industrial civilization”, which indicates just a starting point for understanding mass culture as a creation of modernization of society (flow production),

democratization (appearance of leisure time) and individualisation (urbanisation and atomisation). In the following subchapters, I will investigate three more specific attitudes to mass culture; namely, as a common set of practices, as a set of symbols, and as a set of texts.

### 1.2.1 Mass culture as a set of practices

As a matter of fact, the Frankfurt School brought up the issues of reformulation of social practices caused by mass culture influence, reformulation of values, and the problems of human beings as far as the 1930–1940s. They reflected upon modern epoch, new (at the time) practices of leisure and entertainment such as listening to radio, watching TV, collecting plate recordings and stated that these activities constrained the specific new structure of one's everyday routine.

Notably, the Frankfurt School introduced one of the most important peculiarities of mass culture, which is the possibility of structuring time. In a broad scale, the leisure time was a consequence of the Second Industrial revolution and is considered one of the very premises of the emergence of mass culture. More free time appeared due to the downturn of the handwork by means of machine work. Since more free time became available for leisure, it restructured people's lives in a great scale. It might seem that people acquired more freedom after their working hours to dedicate the free time to entertainment. However, Horkheimer and Adorno notice a new paradox here (1972[1944]: 137),

Amusement under late capitalism is the prolongation of work. It is sought after as an escape from the mechanized work process, and to recruit strength in order to be able to cope with it again. But at the same time mechanization has such power over a man's leisure and happiness, and so profoundly determines the manufacture of amusement goods, that his experiences are inevitably after-images of the work itself. [...] Pleasure hardens into boredom because, if it to remain pleasure, it must not demand any effort and therefore move rigorously in the worn grooves of association.

As it appears, they still describe Western model of mass culture as a phenomenon occurring in opposition to work/leisure. Yet another, albeit a different, idea of mass culture existed in the Soviet Union, where mass culture was seen as the transmitter of the ideological stance. Back in 1953, MacDonald wrote:

Yet the fact that U.S.S.R. is even more a land of Mass Culture than is the U.S.A. This is less easily recognizable because their Mass Culture is in form just the opposite of ours, being one of propaganda and pedagogy rather than of entertainment. [...] Like our own, it exploits rather than satisfies the cultural needs of the masses, though for political rather than commercial reasons. (MacDonald 1956[1953]: 60)

Finally, in fact as late as in the 1970s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Western phenomenon of consumer culture appeared, which can be treated as a more crystallized contemporary form of mass culture in the sociological outlook. A new pattern of shopping as entertainment appeared, that surely was not typical of Soviet mass culture.

Things changed drastically when the new digital era came on to the stage. From the beginning of the 2000s up until today, Internet steadily began to shape new practices of man all over the world, wherever it could reach. In accordance to the Ericsson Consumerlab report, Internet is involved in all consumer trends nowadays (2015: 3). What is more, that involvement enriched everyday life with a possibility to influence our environment and not least with Internet of Things, which implies internetworking of physical objects. According to the same report, 4 out of 5 people now experience a lifestyle network effect, where an individual's benefit from a range of online services increases as more people use them (ibid., 6). This cultural trend is known also as participatory culture, which expands from year to year. I do not aim to analyze participatory culture here in length, but just take into account that channels of mass culture have changed considerably during the last 100 years. New digital means of communication enriched mass culture with new forms (digital texts (Kirby 2009), on-line practices). When the first era of mass culture was characterized by unilateral communication from above, that evoked pessimistic views of philosophers and sociologists, then today mass culture is shaped by new modes of networking and is establishing new patterns of everyday routine. Therefore, based on the understanding of mass culture as a set of patterns, two general heteropolar approaches can be distinguished; namely, there is an approach treating mass culture as a phenomenon *manipulating* human being, and there is another one, which is considering it as a phenomenon *emancipating* human being (Kurennoj 2014).

(1) The first approach focuses mostly on philosophical and sociological dimensions of mass culture. Human being is considered as a bearer of social practices, who is influenced by economic and political background in capitalist society having released through mass culture from above. In fact, this is a continuation of debunking the idea of an added value by Marx. That is why the most followers of the *manipulative* aspect of mass culture elaborate Marxist "philosophy of suspicion" in general. Horkheimer and Adorno set the pace with their critical attitude interpreting mass culture as a sort of propaganda that plays for a patsy of the grassroots (1972[1944]). For Horkheimer and Adorno, mass culture is equal to propaganda inasmuch it persuades people to follow its hidden economic rules that enslave human being. The Soviet mass culture is regarded foremost from this point of view as being a bearer of communist ideology and political ideas. Geldern elaborates:

Many Bolsheviks saw art as the path from ideology to internal thought. It converted abstract phrases into concrete images. As Nadezhda Krupskaya, an old Bolshevik and director of the Committee for Political Education, said:



“Workers usually think in images, and therefore artistic images are most convincing for the worker masses”. (1995: xii)

The approach to mass culture as a manipulative technique thus focuses on mass culture as a sort of weapon regardless what its driving motive for manipulation exactly is (whether economical or political).

This attitude raises several important questions. For example, Kirby (2001) and Žižek (2005) raised the question about the activity/passivity within mass culture. Houellebecq (1998) and Gladarev (2006) conceive human being as a completely passive object of manipulation, in other words, a victim of producers of goods. Graaf, Wann, and Naylor (2005[2001]) provide a great number of examples of shopping, which is like a virus, destroys society (the same fears were intrinsic to Adorno’s research).

The manipulation achieved through mass culture was the main focus of Barthes’ interrogation of mythology of his mass culture studies (1977[1957]). In fact, Barthes equated mythology to ideology. In this sense, mythology (ideology) of mass culture comes into force through stereotyping. For example, by reducing narrative to image in order to create an impression or attitude towards certain object (Kozin, Akhmetova 2005: 240), or through transgression of cause-and-effect link which is a native technique for mythological narrative. Thus, mass culture is regarded as a sort of weapon putting man into prison of his own plots. I find the main limit of this approach in the cancellation of human being as a conscious subject.

(2) The alternative, emancipatory approach, sets human being as a subject of freedom of choice and as one that emerges mostly under the umbrella of philosophical and anthropological paradigm. A notion of this approach can be found in Tocqueville’s reflections about the modern culture in his book, “Democracy in America”, (2000[1835–1840]: 435) where he writes:

When it was only the rich who had watches, they were almost all excellent. Scarcely any but mediocre ones are made any longer, but everyone has one. Thus democracy not only tends to direct the human mind toward the useful arts, it brings artisans to make many imperfect things very rapidly, and the consumer to content himself with these things.

In other words, the quality of a product might decrease in bed of its availability, but what is important is that it becomes the means of democratization. Mass culture emancipates grassroots by providing people with a new and higher quality of life, bringing comfort and issuing new possibilities for learning, self-development and maintaining health.

In this regard, examining mass culture as the new cultural and historical paradigm, Mischenko (1999: 4) emphasizes transformation of man to the anthropological type of “mass-man”. He emphasizes that the concept of “mass”, according to this perspective, is a result of personality standardization in modern societies and that mass culture, in this respect, is a phenomenon shaping

the specific subject – “mass-man’ who still deserves to be respected as personality (ibid., 6). Huyssen (1986), Vorobjova (2006), Kurennoj (2014) and many other researchers have followed this philosophical-anthropological framework in analyzing mass culture.

What is certain is that neither of these approaches can cover the whole complexity of life and explain mass culture exhaustively; moreover, each generalization is, in a way, a neglect of details. I personally incline towards a moderate treatment of mass culture while at the same time agree to applying the philosophical and anthropological stance because it opens up a path to existential dimensions of mass culture and takes into account new patterns of mass culture determined by its new forms (commuting, digital video, social networking, etc.). On the one hand, this provides us with a possibility to consider human being as the subject of semiosis within mass culture and not just an object of mass culture influence. On the other hand, we can thus focus on how man actively builds (mass) cultural environment by everyday conscious choice that he deploys in his meaning-making process and in myths in particular.

At the same time, social premises cannot be neglected and mass culture by definition cannot be regarded as purely an environment of freedom that somehow just releases the creative potential of man. It always includes ambivalent process altogether with its emancipatory potential; mass culture includes patterns-practices, which effectively are social constraints themselves. The most mass culture practices are usually defined as consumer culture, which is an entire phenomenon in itself and can be still treated as one of the forms of mass culture inasmuch it contains entertainment.

The consumer culture came into its hayday ever since supermarkets and shopping malls became a part and parcel of our everyday life in the 1970s. Public spaces of consumption became a scene of social relationships formation, named the “spectacle” by Debord (1994[1967]). Debord’s theory of the society of spectacle is in fact a continuation of the Veblen’s theory of “conspicuous consumption” and of much later Baudrillard’s ideas, which focused on the problem of the symbolic meaning of objects outweighing their practical value. As a matter of fact, consumer culture exists as long as everyday commodities became a goal in themselves. While Baudrillard (1996[1968]) describes the same process of object democratization, as Tocqueville, he does it from another angle. If celebrity possesses a unique object (or puts forward a unique practice), the latter transmits its elitist status through affiliation and, thus, deficiency. The more deficient an object is, the greater demand it has. Now, when in its further stages it is offered to the grassroots level, it no longer is an elite object but a becomes a standardized object; a “must have”. Often, mass culture becomes a background for the delusive process of conspicuous consumption; it usually happens when an object is being consumed in order to acquire its supplementary value that is its exclusiveness or/and compulsoriness. It is here where brands take the stage and consumer culture ambivalently coincides in meaning

with mass culture as a culture of entertainment conveyed through the channels of mass communication.

To give an example, shopping turns into a conspicuous practice specifically notable before the Christmas and during the Black Friday. Another good example is coffee-drinking pattern (including take-away coffee drinking), which has become a consistent pattern of mass culture business and other subfields. People drink coffee not because they enjoy its taste but for its effective networking. That is a direct consequence of conformism and mechanism of inheriting on the demarcation lines of social constraints.

These kinds of practices become much more complicated and intertwined when they are converged together with the digital culture and the Internet of Things. Firstly, there increases demand for ambience consumption. A consumer uses to be aware of environment around him/her and becomes ever more exacting. Secondly, public practices of consumption become also a battlefield for social identity-construction. It then is not only about the type of goods to buy and outlets or the sections in shops to visit, but also about strategies, sceneries of conduct and the interaction of them (Sassatelli 2007: 164). Thirdly, an important issue of time of consumption and consumption of time steps forward when everybody is spoiled with the availability of information and services through Internet. Unlike in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, people have much more free time at their disposal nowadays. A commentator elaborates:

With more wealth and leisure time at their disposal, common people became more inclined to live the good life. And with the economic capacity to improve their chances of staying healthier and thus of living much longer than previous generations, a desire to buy goods for the pleasure of doing so started to define the collective state of mind. (Danesi 2008: 70)

Since the subjects of mass culture have more free time nowadays, it should be obvious that they also have more opportunities for idleness and pastime. However, Sassatelli (2007: 164–165) contends that idleness and killing time are not correct terms to describe the contemporary leisure activities because they are extremely structured and organized; moreover, there is diverse spectrum of spaces involving the entire spectrum of needs. Sassatelli concludes that even an alternative choice of a consumer is, in fact, an embedded possibility, which is not a choice of a free will. Moreover, consumption does not seem to mean entertainment, since it is mainly related with spending money and resources gained during one's work. The last point is the direct continuation of the thesis suggested by Horkheimer and Adorno (1972[1944]: 137).

Even though I tend to agree in some respect in considering consumption within the framework of mass culture with the thesis concerning constraints embedded in culture since it is a social phenomenon and I fully acknowledge that it includes a wider set of practices also related to consumption of human biological sources such as health and time. Then again, I do not share the idea that it is impossible to escape and I understand those processes as man's

intention to remain predictable as a social being and continue to stay a responsible member of society; to maintain some order and to ensure oneself that some predictability in society is kept.

What I have observed from unstructured interviewing of several students during researching the subject matter is that many coffee-culture consumers maintain the practice of drinking coffee-to-take-away or coffee-in-house just because the ritual of coffee drinking is an important accessory of communication in contemporary culture. An invitation for a cup of coffee means the invitation for communication (the same as invitation for “chips” (French fries)), however, at the same time shapes rituals of overconsumption of coffee beverage anyway, not to even mention smoking culture, or drinking culture which follow the same patterns. I can easily back up this claim:

[...] our daily life is typically organized as alternating between times/space of work and times/spaces of consumption: we wake up and ‘consume’ breakfast at home or in a coffee-shop, we go to work in a factory or office where we spend most of the day, taking a ‘break’ from ‘work’ only to ‘consume’ a sandwich at a pub, in a canteen or food outlet, we return home where a series of instruments help us complete our diverse acts of ‘consumption’ – from listening to a new CD we bought in the nearest shopping centre to relaxing in a hot bath with a miraculous essential oil recommended by a friend. (Sassatelli 2007: 3)

The geo-cultural landscape of a contemporary city and its neighbourhoods, or even of entire countries and their specific structuring (e.g. capital vs. small towns, tourist cities, student cities, or Las Vegas as a specific entertainment zone) offers different types of consumer experiences. Sassatelli (ibid., 168) calls it as “organized contexts of involvement”, where different types of identities can be explored and applied. For example, albeit small scale, of all the fitness club options, one may try different types of activities from dancing strip plastics to boxing classes. Here I strongly disagree with Sassatelli’s main thesis that everything is just consumption. If it is implied from the definition of consumer culture, there is a territory where consumer culture and mass culture do not coincide and we also have to take into account that there is such a thing as enjoyment. What I mean is that mass culture brings joy and other existentially meaningful experiences even together with practices of consumption, and the main factor is that it is chosen freely by a conscious subject.

Once we take a step back and try to see the background of consumption as practice, which came from shopping as a social practice, very interesting facts reveal. Gladarev (2006: 118) concludes that although shopping turns into “steady pattern of late capitalism society” it possess an ancient and most obviously also a universal origin. Man attempts to understand and to take a possession of the world as an object, which is the hallmark of anthropogenesis. In fact, setting goals is generally inherent to human beings from birth as a unique feature of human life and unlike animals. Bataille, in his text, “Theory of

religion”, considers this peculiarity as an *immanent* one and as deprived of subject-objective categories (Bataille 2006: 19–21).

From anthropological point of view, human being can *possess*, in other words *comprehend*, only what he is capable to produce: the instrument of labour is a good example to illustrate this statement. And if a man is not able to *produce* the world, hence, he cannot understand it fully, and even more specifically, to *possess* it and *appropriate* it. Thus, there arises the existential idea of the world as being sacral. However, the desire of immanency of the world is important for mankind nowadays, too, and the universal device of its satisfaction, in Gladarev’s opinion, is a sacrifice. The purpose of a sacrifice is to break the circuit of “productive subject-objective relations of practicality” (Gladarev 2006: 112–113). In the contemporary capitalistic world, money became the main worth for atomized unreligious individuals-consumers and the corresponding (secular) mode of sacrifice shopping became, to put it another way, “a rudiment of religious practice realized in space of supermarkets” (ibid., 115–116). The existential reason for this practice, according to Gladarev, is “approaching to the immanent state of creature living [...] The fear of time and death, that is unfamiliar to animals, is overcome by means of shopping. It immerses consumers temporarily into the animal state of immanency” (ibid., 118). So money is being spent to achieve this very purpose. Baudrillard has explained the existential reasons of the same phenomenon from anthropological point of view in a following manner: “with the disappearance of the old religious and ideological authorities, are becoming the consolation of consolations, the everyday mythology absorbing all the angst that attends time, that attends death” (Baudrillard 1996[1968]: 96). Therefore, from philosophical and anthropological point of view, consumption can be regarded as an existential choice within the circumstances of contemporary culture.

Besides the irrational aspect, there is also a social-political ground supporting this phenomenon. The first manifestations of consumer choices were direct expressions of their opinion in boycotts and actions of protest in the early 20th century together with labour rights movements. Nowadays, consumption can be treated as a political conduct, a political choice of different manner (passive, active, etc.). Sassatelli insists that consumers can influence politics using their “purchasing power” (2007: 186). Furthermore, such practices of alternative consumption are not a private choice, it is a trend and it is framed by different external influences. While there are alternative consumption shifts, the direct and sustainable links of the consumption (instead of the traditional, the economic, ethical, and political decisions are also incorporated), still it remain to be consumption. Today, the shifts in consumption occurred mostly towards the political choice. This makes the choice of a person ever more public than private. Just to add a recent example, at least a year before the anti-Russian sanctions were officially introduced in Ukraine (in September 2015), many supermarkets were marking the goods with the bright-coloured labels, “Russian commodity”, in order to attract the attention of consumers and prevent them

from consuming Russian goods and appealing this way to consumers as being politically conscious.

Thus, in this structure of consumer culture, there arises the issue of the boundaries of freedom of human beings. Can one keep on staying a free being and a consumer at the same time? Researchers have been struggling with this point as far back as first researches on mass culture and industrialization appeared. Horkheimer and Adorno, in particular, were deeply concerned with this issue. In anticipation to the future technological progress, they raised a question about the alteration from a homo-Creator status to a homo-user status and thus shifting from an Active human being to a Passive human being who becomes a potential victim of manipulation:

The step from the telephone to the radio has clearly distinguished the roles. The former still allowed the subscriber to play the role of subject, and was liberal. The latter is democratic: it turns all participants into listeners and authoritatively subjects them to broadcast programs which are all exactly the same. (Horkheimer, Adorno 1972[1944]: 149–150)

Admittedly, the main limitation of the manipulative approach to mass and consumer culture is that it describes human within very limited boundaries; within an inescapable situation, “alienation of self” (Fromm 1996), as well as within the alienation of creative function and being incapable of possessing the world both literally and symbolically. This approach reduces the entire whole of social being just to act of consumption related and determined by commercial value of commodities. However, as it determines the main topical issues of contemporary culture, it should be taken into account.

In reflecting upon these burning issues, I tend to incline more towards the emancipatory approach, which opens up a perspective to mass culture as a territory of existential experience, enjoyment and free choice of a conscious subject. It is even more so for the reason that the means of mass culture (Internet of Things, online facilities) provide new possibilities for people to be more emancipated than, say, even 20 years ago. Thus, the territory of mass culture is constructed by social practices of amusement and consumption and they reveal a special type of existential experiencing in the contemporary societal conditions.

### 1.2.2 Mass culture as a set of symbols and texts

I have thus far presented mass culture as a modern phenomenon and as a set of practices overlapping with consumer culture, which is an important background for treating mass culture as a semiotic system; namely as a set of symbols and texts.

The semiotical outlook to mass culture texts was introduced by Barthes. He was especially concerned with such genres as semiotics of vogue, advertising, cinema and he analyzed how extra meanings and connotations within mass

cultural narratives intentionally or spontaneously were created and how they influenced man similarly to any other kind of ideology. Barthes called it the *mythology of mass culture* (1977[1957]) and I will return to examining this notion in the Chapter 2.1.4.

There have been many researchers dwelling on semiotical issues of mass culture in general as well as on its several sub genres. To name only a few, there are works on semiotics of cinema by Metz, J.Lotman, Bordwell, on fine arts – J(G) Burnham, J.Lotman (1977), on novel – Barthes, Eco (2005[1979]), on poetry – M.Riffaterre, on modern culture and its aesthetic forms – D. MacCannell and J (G) MacCannell, on spatial habitation Gottdiener and Lagopoulos (1985), on visual semiotics – Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), on semiotics of commodities – Nöth (1988), on semiotics of brands and marketing – Baudrillard (1998[1970]), Floch (1985, 2001[1990]), Danesi (2008), Oswald (2012; 2015), and research on comics – Kukkonen, J.Baetens.

Back in 1988, Nöth gave a brief classification of the existing semiotic approaches towards mass culture. Most importantly, there was (1) the semiotic research of advertising, or research of messages about commodities, (2) the brand image research, which is analysis of commodities as messages between producers and consumers, and (3) the symbolic consumption research, which understands commodities as messages in communication between consumers (Nöth 1988: 355). Nöth in his turn advocated in favour of the multi-framed approach, assuming that “commodities are objects which are perceived by the consumers from various semiotic perspectives or, in the terminology of cognitive science, within various frames” (ibid., 359). As a consequence, he regards commodities in the utilitarian, the commercial and the socio-cultural frames simultaneously.

Based on this literature review, I would suggest dividing all semiotical research on mass culture texts into three groups. By this division, the first group would represent research implying semiotical aspect of mass culture as an optional and additional aspect to economic value and sociological meaning of its objects. This group is represented in the very first semiotical research attempts to mass culture. The second group would focus on culture semiotic analysis of mass culture texts and symbols as contemporary a phenomenon that implies developed methodology predominantly of culture and narrative studies. The third approach (the most recent one), combines the two previous ones and considers mass culture texts and symbols within marketing processes as being under the umbrella of marketing semiotics and qualitative marketing research inasmuch as mass culture symbols become a special language.

(1) Based a great deal on Barthes’ ideas, Gottdiner presents the first approach among several others. I will not stop to consider it here in length, but just briefly illustrate its main idea. Gottdiener and Lagopoulos claim that the concept of mass cultural object can implicate “beginning from products perceptions (telecast) concluding extremely substance experience” (Gottdiener, Lagopoulos 1985: 979). Nevertheless, the researcher reveals that mass cultural

product always consists of not only conventional-symbolic but also economic, political, and utilitarian values.

Carrying of cloak for protecting from a rain and not for what must other purpose mean that the use of this product serves as the indicator of climate. In this case a mass culture [*in semiotical understanding– L.Z.*] interferes only, when a cloak, due to a fashion, is put on also for the second effect. (Gottdiener, Lagopoulos 1985: 993)

This idea is inherently embedded also in Barthes's theses, specifically in that he presumes writing about connotative meaning that mass culture abounds with, as a specific point providing to mass cultural goods a *mythological* value. As Brunner points out, an individual does not strive to gain benefit from the commodity upon staying tuned with it, but follows his irrational impulses and reasons instead (1987: 371–374). Thus the first attempts to consider mass culture semiotically, is to approach it as optional to the utilitarian aspect.

(2) The second approach corresponds to the Pierce-Morris project of semiotics based on sign as an atomic element of any semiotic system. Therefore, several signs and texts can be regarded as atoms of mass culture as a semiotic system. That is an approach to modern culture as “culture of logotypes” in all (Klein 2000), where brands, mass culture texts, and people are closely inter-related and influence world culture in collaboration. It is not only about visual logotypes of brands, but also about acoustic or olfactory signs becoming indexical identifiers. For example, “Star wars” jingles is a brand acoustic logotype; “Jingle Bells” are strongly associated with the Christmas in advertising; pentatonic melody stands for the symbol of Chinese culture in advertisement. To present another example, perfumes such as Channel #5 and “J’adore” from Dior became iconical signs. Also, several different odours like spicy, citrus, or pine can be used as certain signs for creating an appropriate ambience in processes of sale.

On the one hand, this trend corresponds to the McDonaldization<sup>6</sup>, the trend determined by Ritzer in 1993 as the process “by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world” (2004: 1). Most notably, it reflects homogenization and extent of common social patterns in a global scale, which can be noticed in the examples of other viral traditions, like Starbuckization (that Ritzer also mentions in his more recent works) or in cultural impact of Google's digital eco-system that can be fairly named as Googlization by the same token.

On the other hand, creolization of cultural branding with everyday life also supports this phenomenon when logotypes of brands become so well known and recognizable in everyday culture that people cease to perceive them as indexes of trademarks and they appear as cultural symbols with deeper roots

---

<sup>6</sup> Ritzer coined this term in 1993.



and additional connotations. That gives new opportunities for marketing experts to influence consumer choices and pens perspective for marketing semiotics.

Elaborating Barthes' ideas to examine mass cultural texts, Danesi disengages himself from the utilitarian constituent of commodities and, instead, seeks for the most widespread symbols and universal signs in contemporary culture. Among such symbols, there is a sign X, which general application within pop culture, in Danesi's view (2008: 5), validates "Barthes notion of pop culture as a mythic culture, even though we live in a technologically sophisticated society." According to Danesi, "symbols such as those used in horoscopes or to connect humans to their animal origins (as in totemic practices) are examples of mythic symbols" (ibid., 5). Other examples of the desire of prediction or explaining the future through material objects as real display of mythological mind in mass cultural environment can be seen in inevitable love to horoscopes, other astrological and animistic predictions (such as in the predictions of results of football matches by octopus Paul (FIFA 2008), boar Funtik (Euro-2012), in predictions of weather by groundhog Punxsutawney Phil in USA, and similar).

Laconic symbols, similar to archaic ones, are widespread nowadays in marketing technologies, which is a key to the success for promoting commodities in the mass market. Danesi emphasizes more culture anthropological dimension of this phenomenon; "as derivatives of ideographs (pictographs standing for abstractions), logos imbued products and services with ancient symbolic power" (Danesi 2008: 59), which is even more ancient than alphabet characters reverberating with mythic meanings. In the meantime, it is important that a certain product would be associated with the expressly distinguished symbol. Danesi points out (2008: 60):

the more the symbolism evokes the kinds of mystical meanings that early tribal carvings, sculptures, and etched bones evoked, the more psychologically effective it is. As the modern marketer has come to realize, the world of modern human beings is hardly just a world based on logic and science; it is also a world of mystical images and mythic symbols manifesting themselves in many forms and disguises.

Without a doubt, this is an inevitable demand-supply law of the mass market. The consumers of mass culture products became picky and demanded for an added value, which is not only an aesthetic or status-supporting value of a good but, among others, a mythical connotation.

(3) The roots of the third approach can be found in Saussurean and the Prague school semiotic projects, and it also includes Barthes' insights on connotative meaning of mass culture messages. According to this approach, the act of communication is treated as a smallest unit of study, which suggests the contextual aspect as the cornerstone of this approach. Floch, Nöth, Kress, van Leween and Oswald contributed to this semiotic marketing approach and thereby giving new insights on contemporary culture. The context involves not only cultural but also economic and political aspects of any act of communication

between producers and recipients of mass culture message in any form. To a large extent, such approach belongs to the territory of marketing experts but anthropologists and semioticians are also highly needed here as this issue seems to require multidimensional insights.

The outstanding research of Kotler regarding contemporary economics proves the turn in global marketing trends and transformation of supply triggered by the shift of the demand and people's aspirations in general. He prominently demonstrates the crucial role of the semiotic aspect in marketing. Kotler explains this in a following manner (Kotler et al. 2010: 20):

The rise of the creative scientists and artists, consequently, changes the way human beings see their needs and desires. Spirituality is increasingly replacing survival as a prime need of human beings [...] society today is increasingly in search of spiritual resources on top of material fulfillment. [...] As a result of this growing trend in society, consumers are now not only looking for products and services that satisfy their needs but also searching for experiences and business models that touch their spiritual side.

Representatively, an average modern consumer has by now gone beyond the model of a customer described by the classic theory of economics. It became highly important to reach the inner spiritual triggers of consumers, which would benefit commercial needs. Semiotics, in this case, became a bridge between theoretical speculation, case studies, and even practical application of these insights. Large international marketing research companies such as Nielsen, GfK, and TNS involve multidimensional methods to achieve the fullest understanding of any consumer experience phenomenon. For example, GfK represents an authorial method of consumer experience deep research called "Discovery 720".

As suggested by Nöth, marketing semioticians nowadays approach mass culture from the multidimensional perspective. Most often, such research is based on practical application of marketing semiotics featuring marketing semioticians such as Malcolm Evans, Laura Oswald (2012, 2015), Martina Olbertova, Philip Tagg (2012) and many other researchers, who present their cases in scholarly publications and practical meetings (e.g. Semiofest).

This approach is also fruitful for finding mythical meanings necessarily implied by context. Once one analyses not just signs and symbols but acts of communication within mass culture and language of commodities, one pays attention on paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations inside this system as a linguistic system (Nöth 1988: 366–367; 1995). As Barthes argued, mythology appears on a paradigmatic axis (Barthes 1977[1957]), that is why the context is the most important background determining the object. Building upon the theoretical background (cultural anthropological, philosophical-anthropological) and searching for a speculative phenomenon which myth is, I also focus on practical aspects of mass culture, where marketing semiotics might assist in the first row. Using Nöth's distinction, I would say that the messages constituted by com-

modities and messages appearing around commodities (brand narratives) become more meaningful for the receiver (consumer) if they appeal to eternal existential triggers. Therefore, taking into account the existing approaches I do not focus on the relation between meanings, but on the extra structures that exist on the paradigmatic axis, which are universal mythological units.

Hereby, I should also formulate a definition of symbols and texts of mass culture. Based on a presumption that text is treated as an open cultural form (Barthes, Eco, Kirby and others), I regard texts of mass culture as cultural forms, which are preliminarily finished but still suggest a possibility to be influenced by the context from other texts of culture (external intertextuality) and by the consumer (inner intertextuality). At the same time, mass culture symbols are regarded as finished patterns within a text and thereby constituting a mass culture language of sorts. Several texts can become the symbols of mass culture once they acquire acknowledgment and become recognizable. For example, a movie can be regarded as a mass culture text, but later on it can become a symbol being quoted or referenced inside other texts when this symbol adds a supplementary meaning (e.g. “James Bond” epopee). The creolization process within mass culture implies free flowing between those two cultural forms that disclose perspectives for interpretation or reinterpretation of mass culture texts and symbols, which in turn means that symbols can convey mythological meaning as resisting connotation and consequence of folding from text to symbol. Danesi aptly highlights this:

A logo works on several psychological levels, from the iconic to the mythic. At the iconic level, a symbol such as the V-shaped ears of the Playboy logo simply represents the shape of rabbit ears; but at a mythic level, it taps into the idea of the power of the feminine form and its many archetypal connotations (as discussed in the previous chapter). The combination of these two levels creates a perception of the logo as harboring an implicit mythology – a suggestive story that has culturally relevant meaning. (Danesi 2008: 60)

Holt, who is not a semiotician but marketing researcher, inquires into the same phenomenon and argues that brands [texts] become icons [symbols] due to mythological value that is embedded in them (Holt 2003: 8).

What should be added, is that this approach to mass culture that focuses on the act of communication as an atomic structure, discloses perspectives to mass culture as J.Lotman’s modeling system, who defines it as a structure of elements and of rules of combining them (Lotman 1998[1970]). As opposed to natural language as the primary modeling system, mass culture can be treated as a secondary modeling system, which includes art, law, science and other disciplines. Admittedly, the dynamics of mass culture symbols and texts’ circulation can be treated as a language in a wider sense similarly to any other system facilitating “communication between two or more individuals may be defined as language” (Lotman 1977: 7). Thus, the “Macdonaldization” as the unification and habitualization of practices deriving from mass culture

environment, can be regarded as the process of overturning of mass culture texts and symbols into a secondary modelling system (language).

Following this strategy of multidimensional treatment of mass culture, I would also like to consider mass culture by way of J.Lotman method of the semiosphere within the cultural semiotic approach.

### 1.2.3 Mass culture and semiosphere

As we have seen, mass culture can be regarded as a product of public opinion (in Habermasian meaning, Habermas 1991[1962]: 240)<sup>7</sup> and, at the same time, as contextual environment and background for semiosis. It becomes the environment for semiosis inasmuch as it is a sphere of common meanings uniting a huge number of people from different indigenous cultural traditions, regardless of geographical territories and social constraints; mass culture is a global culture that became quite a new anthropological phenomenon in the history.

According to J.Lotman, the common territory of semiosis of all mankind is the semiosphere, which is both “the result and the condition for the development of culture” (2000[1992]: 125). Semiosphere can be approached from two angles: as an epistemological meta-concept (the semiosphere), and as an object for analysis (Kull 2005:184, Torop 2005: 164–165). The former (*the semiosphere*) is a method of culture analysis, the latter is a conceptual semantic environment represented by all forms of human culture.

To J.Lotman, semiosphere of culture is an entity possessing semiotic space (1990: 133),

Conscious human life, i.e. the life of culture, also demands a special space-time structure, for culture organizes itself in the form of a special space-time and cannot exist without it. This organization is realized in the form of semiosphere and at the same time comes into being with the help of the semiosphere.

Firstly, and in accordance to J.Lotman, the semiosphere is organized by primary modelling systems (natural languages) and secondary modelling systems (other languages of culture). Regarding the correlation between culture and languages, J.Lotman points out:

We shall define [semiosphere] as the semiotic space necessary for the existence and functioning of languages; in a sense the semiosphere has a prior existence and is in constant interaction with languages. In this respect a language is a function, a cluster of semiotic spaces and their boundaries, which, however clearly defined these are in the language’s grammatical self-description, in the reality of semiosis are eroded and full of transitional forms. (Lotman 1990: 123–124)

---

<sup>7</sup> Following Tardes’ definition of mass opinion as a process of communication between individuals within society.

Secondly, the main features of the semiosphere structure include center-periphery opposition, existence of boundaries (external and internal), semiotic irregularity, asymmetry, and binary oppositions within the system (Lotman 1984).

Mass culture is ambivalently a semiotic space and meaningful environment. In order to analyse mass culture as a part of the whole semiosphere, it should be treated as one of its languages and its materiality should be found in a dynamic repertoire of different cultural forms; such union represents a semiotic essence of mass culture as a part of the semiosphere [contemporary] culture. Mass culture can appear as a language (secondary modelling system) not only from the epistemological point of view; mass culture can also appear as a language in form of symbols indicating epochs (Marilyn Monroe's or Elvis Presley's songs), countries (Pokemons, Matryoshka), brands (Coca-Cola, Nike, etc.), texts (Harry Potter) and rules of their organization (hierarchy, functions, correlation between its elements deriving from mass culture discourse). To give an example, "Star Track" (1979) is a complete text of mass culture, which became a part of mass culture language embedded as a ground for producing other texts, such as the sitcom "Big Bang Theory" (USA, 2007).

This is the sense of semiosphere in the contemporary world, steadily expanding into space over the centuries; it has now taken on a global character, and includes within itself the call signs of satellites, the verse of poets and the cry of animals. The interdependence of these elements of the semiosphere is not metaphorical, but a reality. (Lotman 2005[1984]: 219)

However, when we consider the material aspect of mass culture constituting its intertextuality, an ontological ground can be seen in as overlapping and intersecting with the sub-semiospheres, or "clusters of semiotic spaces" and thereby constituting independent "galaxies" with their own gravitation and as represented by assemblage of symbols and texts. Thus, mass culture can be defined as one of those contemporary sub-semiospheres, organizing and influencing the texts of the contemporary culture.

Preserving features of the whole semiosphere of culture (as outlined by J.Lotman) and being a separate system at the same time, mass culture is phenomenologically consistent and is formed by organization of texts and clusters of texts. For example, mass culture forms appear through diverse materiality of texts maintaining their essence and are well recognizable; they can appear as printed texts, movies, video games, set of goods and equally creolized forms of messages appearing in political performances or constructing social and digital spaces. An ontological principle of this integrity is continuity, because this integrity occurs spontaneously in a process of semiosis; however, it does not happen accidentally. The integrity of the semiosphere and sub-semiosphere in particular originates from human mind structuring environment in its own way. J.Lotman's method of semiosphere includes revelation of external and inner boundaries, heterogeneous spaces, center-periphery oppositions, and

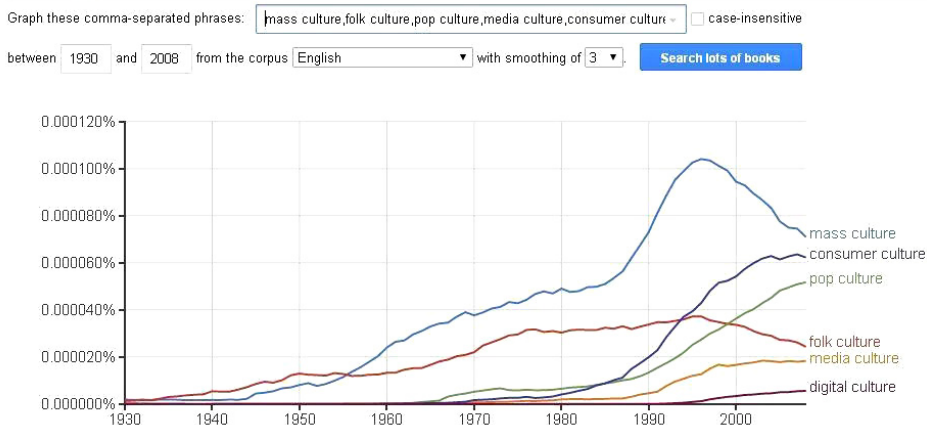
similar, which can be found within sub-semiosphere as well. Technically, all of them can be found within mass culture.

*Boundaries.* An important feature of the semiosphere is the external boundary separating semiosphere from outer chaotic space or from another semiosphere. Being a part and parcel of contemporary culture and everyday routine, mass culture is closely intertwined with other spheres of culture. Accordingly, it is almost impossible to find inner ontological boundaries separating mass culture from other close sub-semiospheres within culture. The boundaries separating mass culture are defined by the minimal correspondence to central typicality of mass culture forms. To use a metaphor, it is comparable to the “horizon of events” of a black hole in cosmology, where the radius of gravitation begins to have an impact. It is possible, then, to define the ontological boundaries of mass culture forms by way of formulating center-periphery opposition. However, it is still important to establish the epistemological borders of the concept of *mass culture* among other concepts such as *popular culture*, *consumer culture*, *media culture*, or even *digital culture*, which are often used as synonyms to *mass culture*.

Sometimes the notion of *mass culture* might sound as an old-school term on its way to disappearing, when compared to the abovementioned concepts. Indeed, those are commonly used to describe the same texts to specify different focus of their treatment. In comparison, the same type of text can be considered from different points of view, i.e. cinema is considered as a sub-domain of mass culture (in the texts of the Critical School) (Horkheimer, Adorno 1972[1944]; Benjamin 1996[1936], Macdonald 1956[1953], as a “motion picture” (Rosenberg and White 1963), as a mass media object (McLuhan 1994[1964]), as a consumer culture phenomenon (Baudrillard 1996[1968]), or as a digital text (Kirby 2001, 2009). Nevertheless, even a quick look at Ngram Viewer shows that *mass culture* as a concept remains to be the most frequently used above all others, as far as the statistics of Google Books in English go (Fig.1)<sup>8</sup>. In addition, there is also the common trend of increased interest to all of them in the 1990s. Another tendency that might arrest our attention is the equation of *mass culture*, *consumer culture*, and *pop culture* concepts during the last 10 years.

---

<sup>8</sup> I have found the similar pictures with the options of other languages at Ngram Viewer.



**Figure 1.** Ngram statistics concerning the occurrence rate of the six concepts in literature.

(1) From our point of view, mass culture territory is not wider nor narrower, or neither identical notion to pop culture. The extents of those concepts can indeed coincide but all of them mostly refer to the different ranges of texts in culture. The notion of mass culture refers to a specific subject of this culture, which is mass audience. Moreover, it focuses attention to the specific mode of relations between recipients-apologetes of this culture domain, which means that there is a culture peculiar to certain number of people that may not be necessarily united by common history, aims, or even geographical territory (different individuals of different social groups can equally visit McDonald's in different parts of the globe for purposes of entertainment and consumption). The main emphasis of this notion lies on equal possibility of mass cultural products-texts to be delivered to different people regardless of other social and cultural differences between them.

Meanwhile, pop culture refers to the texts and practices chosen by great many people as their favourite ones. It means that the centre of sub-semiosphere of pop-culture that is constructed by all cultural forms, has acquired acceptance and recognition by people despite of the origins of texts. It appears, then, that pop culture includes forms of arts, industrial production, folklore and, to some extent, it could be even said that pop culture existed long time before mass culture whereas, mass culture as text consists of choice-determined production of everyday life in any case. McDonald (1956[1953]: 60) aptly noticed this already in the 1950s:

It is also true that Mass Culture is to some extent a continuation of the old Folk Art, which until the Industrial Revolution was the culture of the common people, but here, too, the differences are more striking than the similarities. Folk Art

grew from below. It was a spontaneous, autochthonous expression of the people, shaped by themselves, pretty much without the benefit of High Culture, to suit their own needs. Mass Culture is imposed from above. It is fabricated by technicians hired by businessmen; its audiences are passive consumers, their participation limited to the choice between buying and not buying.

To illustrate this matter with an example, the mass cultural products can indeed become popular, but at the same time, pop culture can also derive from author's texts. The famous case in point would be the story that happened to G. Verdi's "The Duke's song"<sup>9</sup> in 1851. In addition, many cultural practices like Ancient fairs, medieval carnivals, and others, can be treated as pop-cultural practices. Nevertheless, to some extent, pop-culture coincides conceptually in scope more with fashion than mass culture.

In this respect, what is in common to mass and pop cultural texts/practices is the reality of their expansion and availability among wide audience. Then again, the origin of the pop and mass cultural texts may differ; mass culture corpus consists of marketing designed forms of culture and includes not only chosen texts/practices but is also implemented in social structures of everyday routine (such as advertisement and diversion). Thus, mass culture reflects several aspects of contemporary popular culture and vice versa; yet the logical scopes of these concepts do not coincide, they are non-interchangeable.

(2) The very next point illustrates the difference between mass and consumer culture. I treat consumer culture to be the dimensions of mass culture synchronically, and a period in history of mass culture diachronically, which used to be analyzed via methodological framework of social sciences and economic theory. Sassatelli argues that consumer culture is a set of social practices:

Culture, including the culture of consumption, is a social practice which is continually accomplished in various ways by social actors who thereby overcome some differences and create others. (Sassatelli 2007: 181)

If we were to presume that mass culture includes a somewhat broader context than merely social practices, the difference between those two notions is evident when they are compared synchronically. Moreover, diachronically the term consumer culture became widespread in the last third of the 20th century when Baudrillard (1998[1970]) and other researchers examined it successfully, predominantly through sociological and economical approaches to everyday practices.

For Sassatelli, the consumer culture is based firstly on the choice of actors; nevertheless, it appears that even in this case the choice is rather a political than subjective matter. She explains it in a following manner: "Yet, it emphasizes

---

<sup>9</sup> The famous song, "La donna è mobile", from the opera "Rigoletto" by G. Verdi (1850-1851) became widespread all over the town in one night and was considered for a long time to be a folk song due to its popularity.



choice as a public, other-related, and therefore political, action, rather than a self-interested, private and therefore apolitical affair” (Sassatelli 2007: 188). In this respect, it appears that choice within mass culture comes down to pretty much the same issue of political bias. Notwithstanding, many insights from consumer culture studies might contribute to mass culture research also. For example, the notions such as *shifting codes*, *melange cultures*, *glocalization* and several other different aspects of the consuming process such as *de-commodification*, *borrowed landscape*, and others.

However, now and again, consumer culture as a concept is applied mostly in the sociological approach, so that it could be regarded as a synonym of mass culture to some extent; still, mass culture is a more old-school concept and implies to relations going beyond the scopes of consumerism.

(3) There is yet another notion that might be mixed up with mass culture; viz. [mass] media culture. From our point of view, the notion of media culture only partially reflects the scope of mass culture. The concept of mass media is mostly the bearer and the translator of meanings; it constitutes an important premise for mass culture development. At the same time, mass culture includes not only mass media in common sense, but other media like social practices, consumer rituals, and other forms (i.e. brand narratives, signs, retail space design, vogue). What is more, mass media in the contemporary discourse implies first of all to some virtual space of display. Regardless, I conceive that mass culture possesses at the first instance a real space and time (e.g. urban landscape). For those reasons, [mass] media culture is a narrower notion than mass culture. That being said, media studies can indeed provide important notions for discussion such as transmedial worlds (Klastrup, Tosca 2004), remediation (Bolter, Grusin 2000) and resemiotization (Iedema 2003) that can be of use for mass culture studies.

At this point, I can include the comparison with the notion of digital culture to the discussion. By digital culture people usually mean the Internet, or even more precisely, the Web 2.0 culture (Kirby 2001). Due to the same reasons as before, the digital culture can be regarded only as a part of mass culture. The more precise correlation was aptly noticed by Semenenko (2012: 99): “the Internet can be seen as a model of culture that copies (translates) its structures with an additional degree of organization and can therefore be considered a global metatext of culture, one of its dynamic self-portraits”.

*Heterogeneity.* The structural and semantic dimensions of a discourse are being built upon codes and their dialectic relationship, and also between them as their implementation “in use and in action” (Benveniste 1967: 224). Mass culture as semiotic environment is heterogeneous and asymmetrical; those features determine tension and dynamics for circulation of its forms between centre and periphery. Contemporary culture in general is built up from gradually increasing amount of unlinked atoms of information, which Moles (1967) designated as the *mosaic* type of culture. He argues that the mosaic culture shifted towards the consequential humanitarian (encyclopaedian) type of culture in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and led to another way of

perceiving information. Houellebecq's (1998) metaphorical comparison of the modern world with a supermarket makes a good illustration of the notion of the mosaic culture, which appeared as a world of discreteness.

An opposition of continuity and discreteness is an ontological opposition of the entire culture, where the former corresponds to the principle of integral perception, and the latter, to analytical perception of the object. The archaic mind and view of human being is related to the right hemisphere that was reflected in developed mythological systems of those times; it was an initial attitude of the world's integral perception opposing to the later scientific attitude of world cognition. Shuklin (2001: 188) outlines that the left and the right are one of the mythological juxtapositions of the negative and the positive, the female and the male, the bad and the good, the north and the south, because during their rites people used to turn to the East, so there was the North from his right and the South from his left. These oppositions are reflected in many superstitious beliefs even until now, and they explain the phenomenon of superstition itself, which is an emotional perception of the world involving occasional causal relations instead of rational explanation. The right/left division in culture has also an existential nature. However, I will not focus on this subject in length.

Despite mass culture being a mosaic set of discrete culture forms (the metaphor of the world as supermarket is commonly used for mass culture), I would also add, that mass culture is *a supermarket of signifiers*; it appears as continuous environment for human mind, as its main initial functional field was enjoyment, recreational pleasure, entertainment and play as its activities. Human mind permanently applies the both attitudes of perception during its life however simplified the grasping of its integral object is. It requires no more than the application of proven patterns and familiar ways of cognition that is comfortable for the brain. The phenomenon of *post-truth* politics is an evident example of such mode of perception in political discourse. Mass cultural discourse also provokes recipients to experience it in a simplified mode when the whole ever-growing amounts of discrete units, patterns of information, are perceived by human mind as continual unity. At this level, mythological mechanisms as peculiar simultaneous ways of integration information come up on the stage.

*Center-periphery.* As I have outlined, center-periphery opposition defines the boundary of semiosphere. J.Lotman and Uspensky note in this regard that

Thus, the entire system for preserving and communicating human experience is constructed as a concentric system in the center of which are located the most obvious and logical structures, that is, the most structural ones. Nearer to the periphery are found formations whose structuredness is not evident or has not

been proved, but which, being included in general sign-communicational situations, function as structures. (Lotman and Uspensky 1971: 147)<sup>10</sup>

Mass culture can be treated in both ways; as the semiosphere and as a particular part of a semiosphere as entire whole. When we analyse mass culture via method of semiosphere, it appears as an entity, which encompasses its most typical forms; typically they allude to common functions of this semiotic entity. When we analyse mass culture as a part of the whole semiosphere of human culture, its centre is also represented in the most evident and consistent general cultural forms within its funnel.

Myth is a consistent cultural form penetrating the whole the semiotic space. The shatters of Ancient mythologies allude to different cultures and epochs and appear in different texts of contemporary culture. When we compare the tension towards the centre with the gravity, archaic mythological elements gravitate towards the centre of semiosphere of culture and mass culture as its part. Apparently, the centre of mass culture as a semiotic entity is determined by specific connotation that alludes to the common functions of mass culture forms such as consumption, amusement, informatization, and leisure (entertainment). More marginal forms of mass culture, or hybrid forms, (political advertisements, popular scientific texts) are situated closer to the borderline, or to the “event horizon” of mass culture semiosphere.

### 1.3 Findings

To sum up, I treat mass culture as a *multidimensional environment of social practices, that is patterns of behaviour, texts, images, artefacts and other constituents of culture*, and most importantly, also as a *semiotic space and semiotic system with determined hierarchy of its inner elements*. In my opinion, mass culture is a part of the semiosphere and a semiosphere in itself with specific rules of its inner semiotic organization, which are the same than that of the whole semiosphere of culture. From the semiotic stance, I regard mass culture as both a language and a text of culture.

I assume that, in a way, mythology organizes mass culture when it turns from a cluster of texts into a semiosphere. The next subchapter is dedicated to ontology of the mythological elements of mass culture and to the elaboration of our assumption.

---

<sup>10</sup> The quotation is given by translated publication of this article (Lotman Juri, Uspensky Boris and Mihaychuk George 1978. On the semiotic mechanism of culture. *New Literary History*. Vol. 9, No. 2, Soviet Semiotics and Criticism: An Anthology. 211–232: 213).

## 2. MYTHOLOGICAL MIND AND SEMIOSIS

In order to specify the dynamics of the concept of myth of mass culture, I will make a short detour to reviewing the historical treatment of myth and mythology on the whole: that is, by analysing myth under the general umbrella of the semiotic stance, I will briefly outline narrative, linguistic, social-normative and universal aspects of myth in culture in order to trace down its main features within mass culture.

There are two general approaches to myth analysis. The first is the analysis of myth as a cultural form, or type of cultural text employed in narratives, images, and symbols. The second is the analysis of myth as a meta-concept; as a way of experiencing reality and structures that constitute its peculiarity. From either point of view, myth is a reflection of human mind, human collective experience and therefore, naturally, *mythological forms* as appearances of myth as a phenomenon, vary depending on epochs. I will mostly focus on the second approach as the main purpose of this research is examining the inner mechanics of myth within mass culture from semiotical point of view.

### 2.1. Myth as a semiotic system: background

Since the beginning of civilization, myth as a cultural artefact has reflected the mindset of the ancient people. The most famous mythological systems are those of Ancient Egypt, Sumerian mythology, Ancient Greek mythology, South-American mythological systems, Indian mythology and of others. Back in the middle of the 20th century, Campbell (2008[1949]: 358) already noted:

“The *problem* (Italics mine – L.Z.) of mankind today, therefore, is precisely the opposite to that of men in the comparatively stable periods of those great coordinating mythologies, which now are known as lies. Then all meaning was in the group, in the great anonymous forms, none in the self-expressive individual; today no meaning is in the group—none in the world; all is in the individual.”

I tend to disagree with Campbell’s statement that myth, as a collective form of experiencing reality, does not exist in contemporary reality. If semiosphere is conditions and product of semiosis, *myth is one of the features of semiosis, which is inseparable from semiosphere*. Carrying Campbell’s hesitations even further, Mark and Pearson claim, “we have *few* if *any* (Italics mine – L.Z.) shared sacred stories to give our lives meaning. [...] As a result, people are thrown back on their own devices” [2001: 36]. While not exactly challenging the second statement, I would still argue, that we do have indeed shared sacred stories; fewer of them, perhaps, in a global scale but more within local social communities. Those stories reflect our deep common existential fears, warnings (e.g. about horrors of wars or terrorism), hopes, wonders (e.g. about mystery of birth and death), etc.

Cassirer argues that Ancient mythology was a threshold to prepare the ground for questions about the origins (αρχή) in Ancient times. Mythological mind faded into insignificance as soon as the scientific methods of world cognition became dominant principles in culture:

As philosophy advanced in methodological self-awareness and beginning with the Eleatic school pressed toward a “critique”, a κρίσις within the concept of being itself, the new world of the logos which now arose and asserted its autonomy was increasingly differentiated from the world of mythical forces and mythical gods. But though the two worlds could no longer *coexist*, an attempt was made to justify the one as at least a preparatory stage of the other. (Cassirer 1955[1923–1929]: 1)

The origin of the word *myth* itself bears witness to its initial function as an archaic modelling system. There are at least two competing theories of the origin of the word *myth*. The first one is represented in the research of Ernshedt (among others) who argues that the word *myth* itself is not authentically Greek (as it generally accepted) but borrowed from an ancient Egyptian word that would have meant, “word” or “talk” (Ernshedt 1953). The available material from the database of ancient African radicals (Militarev 2013) and the dictionaries of ancient Egyptian language (Kahl 2002) also prove this thesis.

There are two words that would have been used <sup>m33</sup> and <sup>m3</sup> which would have, respectively, had the meaning “to see” (sehen) and “observation” or “inspection” (Besichtigung, Inspection) (Ernshedt 1953: 166). Ernshedt also asserts that myth in its fullest sense was substituted later with the synonym λόγος (ibid., 193).

Polysaiev highlights the opposite etymologic approach to myth from Indo-European origin of the radical *meudh-mudh* – to “worry about something”, “pay attention to something”, “desire something for some reason”, and also pays regard to the succession of the primeval sense of myth through the notion of λόγος (Polysaiev 2008: 11).

According to Kazanskene and Kazanskij view (1986), who are researchers of languages of Crete-Mycenae epoch, the word “myth” during Ancient Greek period had the following conjugate definitions: μῆδος “ideas, decisions, plans”; μῆτις – “wisdom, mind”. Dictionaries of Ancient Greek language predominantly demonstrate that μῆθος by frequency of the utilization happened in the meaning of *word, talk, representation, reflection* (Überlegung), *story, language, fairy-tale*, and finally as *a myth* in the known meaning (Frisk’s German etymological dictionary 1960); (1) word, speech (freq. in Homer and other Poets, in sg. and pl.), mere word, (2) public speech, (3) conversation, mostly in pl. (4) thing said, fact, matter, threat, command, charge, mission, counsel, advice, (5) thought thing, unspoken word, purpose, design, matter, (6) saying, saw, proverb, (7) talk of men, rumour, report, message, II. (Tale, story, narrative,

fiction (1968) et al<sup>11</sup>). The Greek dictionary from 1852 offers more precise definitions for myth with emphasis on the speaking nature of this term as compared to logos. Myth – “any elocution” (jeder mündliche Vortrag), mythology – 1) “stories, fables or legends” (das Erzählen von Fabeln od. Sagen), 2) “fables, gossip” (Gefabeln, Geschwätz). Logos – association, collection, composition, compile (das Zusammenlesen, Zusammenlegen, Sammeln, Ordnen).

Thus, the etymology of this concept shows that myth represented a specific communicative system of Ancient times as a product of mind, a certain story but also an adjustment of awareness, mode of thinking and a way of talking about the world.

Up until to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *myth* was treated merely as a specific ancient text, story, or legend in the context of Ancient culture. The very first and the earliest studies of myth were ancient attempts of philosophical reconsideration of mythological material with the help of allegorical interpretation (by pythagoreans, sophists, stoics). “Allegorical interpretation of myths was present in all ancient science” (Cassirer 1955[1923–1929]: 1). In medieval times, the age when Christian theology was preeminent in Europe, this type of treatment of mythology was discredited as pagan one. However, the second wave of interest in myth revives already in the epoch of Humanism, when ancient mythology was seen as expressing the emancipation of human personality. The first scholarly studies of ancient myth could be classified here. Myth used to be treated as the original pre-scientific language of explaining the world.

The first is the so-called naturalistic, or nature-mythological school of myth studies. The representatives of this school were a French philosopher-enlightener Constantin Volney, and later a German theologian and philosopher (young Hegelian) Davis Strauss, but also Arthur Drews, who both studied how description and explanation of nature phenomena (mainly Uranian) were objectified in myths and mythologies as integral mythological systems. They acknowledged mythical heroes as historical personalities. Besides, the nature-mythological approach implied understanding of myth as the one deriving from the reality and intended to explain it as an ancient phenomenon determined by the early stages of evolution of human mind. Many scholars followed this approach later on. There were astral-mythological, Aryan, cultural and historical schools of this type of myth studies.

The representatives of the first two schools, who applied a comparative-historical method, were Alexander Afanasyev (2006), Fiodor Buslayev (1987), Adalbert Kun, Wilhelm Mannhardt, Wilhelm Schwartz, and others. This method was adopted from comparative Indo-European linguistics and actively developed since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. There were two directions within this

---

<sup>11</sup> 1) speech, word 2) pl. talk, discussion 3) advice, indication, 4) matter, issue, point 5) intention, plan 6) utterance, proverb 7) rumour, gossip 8) news, information 9) story, tale, narrative 10) legend, myth 11) fairy-tale, fable 12) plot, story-line (Dvoretzkyj 1958); μύθος – word, speech, talk, , advice, idea, thought, concord, decision, story, myth, also the common etymology to the old church-based Slavic “thought” (Hoffmann 1974).

methodological approach; the first is an *etymologic* direction based on a linguistic reconstruction of the subject matter of myths, and the second is the direction of *analogy* based on the comparison of the texts of different cultures.

The cultural and historical, or cultural and anthropological school examined myth as a transmitter of relict ethnic and mental roots, and also as a pre-scientific explanation of the mondial phenomena. The most prominent representatives of this school were Edward Burnett Tylor and James George Frazer, who were founders of animistic and ritualistic theories of the origin of myth respectively.

There were also a plethora of researchers of myth who did not strictly belong to any school: Alexander Afanasyev, Fiodor Buslaev, brothers Wilhelm and Jakob Grimm, Friedrich Schelling, brothers August and Friedrich Schlegel (the Schelling and Schlegel brothers are often conceived also as the founders of the principal attitudes of the previous three schools). Additionally, Kotlyarevsky, Miller, Potebnya are considered as the so-called “junior mythologists”.

Herbert Spencer and the representatives of the evolutionary school of anthropology (Adolf Bastian, John Lubbock, Lewis-Henri Morgan, Edward Burnett Tylor, and others) adhered a euhemeristic approach to myth. According to this theory, mythological characters were real people and myths were narratives of their heroic acts influenced by rampant imagination and directed on the deification of famous or powerful people.

The origin of semiotic analysis of myth can be also found in the research of mythological poetic nature of Ukrainian linguist Potebnya (1989[1862]). To elaborate, Potebnya scrutinized gnoseological aspect of myth, argued that myth was related to the mental process, and highlighted the sign-oriented nature and mainly verbal form of myth’s manifestations.

A substantial turn in myth studies happened only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the first research of myth as universal cultural invariant appeared.

### 2.1.1 Myth as a metaconcept and cultural universal

Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling (1989[1842]) was the one who inaugurated the scholarly discussions on myth as a metaconcept or, in other words, as cultural universal for the first time. The German philosopher considered myth first not as meaningful archaic narrative, but as a cultural invariant. Schelling assumed that “language is just effaced mythology; abstract and formal diversity of language preserves what was contained in living and figurative diversity of mythology” (Schelling 1989[1842]: 203). The previous research on myth did not take this into account being either historical interpretation of myth (euhemerism) and naturalistic interpretation of myth (naturalistic school). Cassirer comments of Schelling: “[...] he looks upon mythical figures as autonomous configurations of the human spirit, which one must understand from within by knowing the way in which they take on meaning and form” (Cassirer 1955[1923–1929]: 4).

Three schools of the so-called “philosophy of suspicion” (Marxism, philosophy of life and psychoanalysis) developed this approach to myth as a meta-concept. Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud, each in his own way, assumed that unreflective activity of an intellectual subject had been hitherto underestimated. Above all, the concept of myth was unfolded within Freud’s psychoanalytic theory. Freud and his followers regarded myth to be a universal exponent and a fantastic product of human suppressed sexual appetite. This aspect transformed in general cultural studies of archetypes by Jung who was an originator of the archetypes studies and that appeared as a structural part of myth’s explicating existence of the collective unconscious. More recent Eliade’s idea that ontology of myth can be deduced from its “paradigmatic and archetypical nature” (1995[1964]), in a sense, summarizes this direction of mythological studies.

Cassirer, who treated myth as cultural universal and symbolic form, made a substantial contribution to the humanities. Cassirer continued the research on myth as a form of spirit in Schelling’s perspective criticizing positivism and elaborating his own project of culture within the framework of neo-Kantianism. To Cassirer, myth is one of the symbolic forms of culture along with language, religion, law, philosophy, science, and arts. In his view, myth appeared as one of the first of those forms and has been coexisting with them to this day:

Philosophical inquiry into the contents of mythological consciousness and attempts at a theoretical interpretation of these contents go back to the very beginnings of scientific philosophy. Philosophy turned its attention to myth and its configurations earlier than to the other spheres of culture. [...] for it was only by coming to grips with mythical thinking that philosophy could arrive at the first clear formulation of its own concept and its own task. (Cassirer 1955[1923–1929]: 1)

Proving the characteristics of myth, the researcher assures that the contemporary treatment of reality is permeated by mythological mind as a special sort of causal relations between events and phenomena of objective reality.

Emphasizing its symbolical-universal essence, Losev (1991[1930]) argued that myth is a persistent part of consciousness in its ontological status. Losev reflected upon the features that are inherent to the myth itself, and kept coming back to this issue from time to time. In his opinion, myth is the specific existence; “living and absolutely matter-of-fact reality” and being the “greatest in its specificity, the most intensive and the most stretching reality” (1991 [1930]). Hence, he saw it as a vital reality, as a part of consciousness, without which the life of neither individual nor society is possible along the stages of existence. A contemporary Russian philosopher, Zubko, in her monograph, “Myth: view of the Universe”, considers myth as the universal of mind. Nevertheless, she ultimately radicalizes the ideas of Losev by pointing out that myth is a sort of “special reality substantially differing from habitual reality” (2014: 118). Thus, for Zubko, myth is a variety of alternatives to certain virtual



reality. Regardless, by juxtaposing habitual reality and mythological reality, she emphasizes the unique specificity of mythological reality in its peculiar form.

Mamardashvili and Pyatigorskiy presented three basic approaches to myth. The first is the psychological approach whereby myth can be treated as the universal of consciousness, the second one deals with myth as a natural phenomenon contradistinguished to the consciousness of a researcher (that has much in common with Losev's interpretation), and the third one is the treatment of myth as a special method for framing reality (1982: 82–83). Similarly to the latter approach, there is an account developed by a contemporary Ukrainian philosopher Polysajev, who has extensively analysed social premises of myth in Ukrainian socio-cultural context. Polysajev defines myth as the “form of the integral mass experiencing of reality through the agency of perceptibly-evident images that are treated as independent phenomena of reality” (2009: 374). In his opinion, myth is a category of life and, thus, a category of consciousness possessing public nature and vital power of culture (2009: 374–375).

Admittedly, the universal aspect of myth is thereby reduced to the structure of mythological mind and mythological thinking: “Mythology is a map of the mind” (Pattanaik 2013:14). In this regard, Zubko argues that the delimitation of the mythological and rational thinking derives from the Nature-oriented attitude. She counterposes the mythological and rational mind with a metaphor of Fromm's opposition of “to be” and “to have” (Zubko 2012: 162–163). Notably, the researcher concludes that the mythological mind is an ancient practice of integral perception of nature; on the contrary, the rational mind is rather the contemporary practice of separation of nature. Apparently, the product of the former is continuous and that of the latter discrete. Naturally, the *mechanism of integral perception of the discrete environment of mass culture (contemporary nature) by consumers* is authentically a *mythological mechanism*.

The integrality of mythological perception is comparable to simultaneous perception of music. An untrained tuneful ear cannot grasp the structures and layers of the composition but perceives the piece as a whole. Mosco (2004: 28–29) offers an interesting example by illustrating the integrality of perception by mythological mind, “Once a Zen master stood up before his students and was about to deliver a sermon. And just as he was about to open his mouth, a bird sang. And he said ‘The sermon has been delivered’”.

Nekliudov (2005: 24–25) challenges the possibility of delimitation of mythological and rational thinking (in the strict sense of the word) at least when it comes to everyday thinking. He argues that those two types constitute a duality, where one is more predominant, at different practices and different historical phases. Contemporary mythology is not equal to the archaic one just for the reason that it coexists with positive knowledge. In any case, the contemporary mythological world picture is mosaic and not integral (does not cover explanation of everything as in ancient times). For this reason, it is of interest as to how mythological mind incorporates scientific knowledge in producing mythological texts within mass culture reality. Nekliudov (2005: 24)

exemplifies it with “ufologic ‘expertises’” – the pseudo-argumentative form of breakthrough to the structured cosmos of demonic forces (terrestrial level), or political conspiracy theories as the framework of “world evil forces” (national level).

When we proceed from rational mind and compare mythological mind with the former, the mythological mind differs from positive thinking and has its own peculiar logical structure. Lévy-Bruhl, Lévi-Strauss, Cassirer, Nekliudov and other researchers outline these differences, and the most important ones are those summarized by Nekliudov (2005: 10): the rule of “excluded middle” is not adhered, the essence is substituted for origin, the events are considered to imply purposefulness, and the succession in time is perceived as cause and effect connection.

The structure of mythological mind discovers its universality in the formation level of expression (codes depending on national culture), but it emerges also on the universal level of substance. As mythological ideas are related to the basic psychological universals and states, the meaning of the main mythological images matches with the most archaic ideas<sup>12</sup> and existential necessities of human being. Cassirer claims that myth derives from existential necessity of human being to reconcile with reality. The acknowledgement of the finitude of his own being evokes psychological tension and permanent stress of man. Roughly speaking, human being creates myths to free himself from the fears and reconcile with the inevitability of death. Science cannot fully substitute mythology as positivists intended back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mainly because science cannot solve those deep metaphysical issues such as reason for being, aim of history, and mystery of death, which mythology at least pretends to be solving (Meletinsky 1998: 419). That is another reason why myth is still relevant even in the epoch of developed and high technologies.

Many recent studies of myth and its mass cultural forms from philosophical (Mischenko 1999, Polysaev 2008, 2009), anthropological (Buckingham 2003, 2007, Samokhvalova 2004, Lebediev 2010, Novichenko 2010) and to sociological (Tulchinskiy 2011, Hendy 2001) aspects give insights in order to prove this phenomenon as an attitude of mind in perceiving and experiencing contemporary reality. While I predominantly draw upon the positions of the scholars who examine myth as the universal of mind, I also take into account a wider perspective of myth for considering the ontology of the research object. That includes the exploration of myth within contemporary semiosphere (contemporary culture) that is represented in mass culture in particular.

---

<sup>12</sup> Outstanding research of Vladimir Propp on morphology of folk tale (1928) evidently demonstrates this idea.

### 2.1.2 Myth as a translation circuit of social norms

Myth is a part of semiosphere and plays a certain role in semiosis, so the socio-cultural aspect of myth is an important aspect of its ontology. Eventually, in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the cultural-anthropological and structural-semiotic research discovered myth as a regulatory genre (standard, phenomenon) that is important for socium construction. Thus, along with the explanatory function, myth used to regulate social, cultural, and economic life of a certain group. One of the founders of this school is a French philosopher, anthropologist and ethnologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl and a Polish anthropologist Bronyslaw Malinowski. Both of them approached myth as a sort of social matrix. Other significant studies of myth within this framework were done by Wilhelm Wundt, Joseph Campbell, Gustav Le Bon, Gabriel Tarde, Mikhail Livshits, and Mircae Eliade.

From this perspective, myth satisfies the need for holistic knowledge about the world, organizes and prescribes life of man in society (in primeval times exhaustively, later together with other forms of culture (in Cassirer's meaning), such as ideology, science and arts). Myth prescribes to people rules of social behaviour, determines their system of values, helps to overcome their stress evoked by crises in nature, society and in their personal life (Nekliudov 2005: 19). With other words, mythological texts serve to preserve certain worldview, certain model of universe. In accordance with the sociological approach, myth is a part of the world and the world is incomprehensible without it. Moreover, the myths convey some algorithms of social behaviour and political behaviour in particular:

Myth is not merely an anthropological term that one might equate with human values. It is also a political term that inflects human values with ideology. By denying the fullness of the political, myth naturalizes its narrative and raises it to the level of a near impregnable fortress unassailable by ordinary mortals. (Mosco 2004: 30)

The difference between the notions of mythology, political mythology and ideology in mass culture is an important methodological issue. Being a follower of Marxist structuralist approach, Barthes often applies the notion of mythology as a synonym to ideology in his mass culture studies. However, as one can find out, methodologically Barthes distinguishes them,

in accordance with a famous image used by Marx, [...] myth consists of overturning culture into nature or, at least, the social, the cultural, the ideological, the historical into the 'natural'. What is nothing but a product of class division and its moral, cultural and aesthetic consequences presented (stated) as being a 'matter of course'; under the effect of mythical inversion, the quite contingent foundations of the utterance become Common Sense, Right Reason, the Norm, General Opinion, in short the doxa (which is the secular figure of the Origin) (Barthes 1977[1957]: 165).

Evidently, myth for Barthes is a *mechanism* and an *instrument*, whereas ideology is a *content*, which can be delivered via this instrument. Although I accept Barthes idea about myth's structural disposal, I adhere to another attitude; towards ontological difference between mythology and ideology, which is presented in the following passage from Larrain;

The difference is in that ideologies are pursuing the objective of adjusting social discrepancies, meanwhile myths want to eliminate discrepancies between human being and nature. (Larrain 1980: 145, 150) <sup>13</sup>

The Barthesian approach discovers a deeper issue of the culture/nature correlation, which is closer to the Tartu-Moscow approach than to Lévi-Strauss' treatment of the matter (in Rousseau's project of culture) (Lotman 1992: 9). In any case, the social self-awareness is the next level after individuals' understanding of the opposition Me/World [Nature]. In this sense, "myth is primary model of any ideology" (Meletinsky 1998: 419). However, even this primary opposition is mediated by mass culture nowadays, as children's knowledge about the world and nature in a narrower meaning (e.g. Rousseau's meaning) are mostly constructed from experience of cartoons and watching commercials.

Mass culture environment can be regarded as additional (sometimes alternative) urban nature in the contemporary epoch of globalization and especially so for younger generations. Saveljeva aptly notices that "urban mythology"<sup>14</sup> is a peculiar sort of experiencing city, living it down, communicating with it as an integral whole, 'alive' cultural entity, domestication of urban space and time" (Saveljeva 2013: 121). Mass culture is a dynamic entity as something inherent in culture itself and where myth also functions as a force of stabilization and reassurance as an existential need of the human being. Hereby, I would like to elaborate J.Lotman's and Uspensky's idea (1971: 499) that human beings [or culture in general] reach out for instability and development unlike other organic entities [generally nature] aspiring towards the stabilization of their environment. Apparently, myth plays an ambivalent role in the whole semiosphere of human culture; it is means of culturalization of nature in Ancient times and means of "naturalization" (habitualization) of cultural environment nowadays. Back in the primeval times people applied the nature rhythms for expressing and experiencing reality. In Ancient Greece and later in Ancient Rome, *meandros*<sup>15</sup> decorations was figurative embodiment of eternity and labyrinth of life. In other cultures there were similar mythological cryptograms, e.g. in Slavic tradition they were usually depicted at embroideries (*rushnyk* and other ritual clothes). In this way mythological signs turned ordinary objects into sacral ones. Nowadays, this type of synchronization is fulfilled with mass culture signs and symbols (i.e. brands). In our research, I continue with the

---

<sup>13</sup> The translation from German is mine.

<sup>14</sup> I consider urban mythology to be one of the dimensions of mass culture mythology.

<sup>15</sup> Repeated motif in decoration constructed from incurved continuous line.

discussion of mass culture myth as an explication of universal human fears and hopes deriving from the concerns of human nature and the relations with their surrounding environment.

Baudrillard offers yet another correlation of mythology and ideology by analysing mass culture as an ideology (1996[1968]) containing myths. The scope of mass culture sphere (notably publicity discourse) appears in his research as hyperreality, or succession of simulacra. In his book, "Simulacra and simulation", Baudrillard suggests to construe a simulation as the very last stage in development of sign where the absence of its referent is not concealed. Generally, this idea could be put in other words in the following formula: something that is typical is not usually articulated. Thus, in the analysis of mass culture, it is important to pay attention to articulated matters and be aware of a high probability that exactly these points are simulacra. The philosopher makes a further allowance for the fact that man as a conscious consumer is tangled up in the succession of simulacra and befooled by ideology. Proceeding from these Baudrillard's ideas, we can notice another important difference between ideology and mythology. Ideology is created by several individuals or expert community and is beamed down by different means; its direction is outside-in from social to individual's life. At the same time, mythology appears in the process of semiosis and it functions inside-out from individual's experience to social experience.

I distinguish between ideology and mythology of mass culture as metaconcepts emerging and deriving from different cultural relationships (e.g. culture vs. nature; power relationship, political discourse). Notwithstanding, I assume that some cultural texts could be analysed through the both methods of those metaconcepts. Clearly, the same text might be treated as containing an ideological dimension (consumer cultural relations, or even political ideological) as well as mythological dimension (universal and existential). As Gladarev (2006) demonstrates, shopping is a stable practice of the consumer culture but also contains mythological and ideological patterns.

Returning to myth in social reality, Mosco (2004) and Gusejnov (2005: 55), as well as many other researchers, claim that myth transforms cruxes and imperfections of the world into sense bearing units, which are convincing, but not credible and at the same time confirmable in their verity. The narrativity of myth-word provides flexibility; one image or object could be perceived as a true fiction, a universal social law, or as a basis of religious worship. The very nature of ideology is such that it constructs a specific world picture related to a certain political program. As far as political prudence is a prototype of true picture of the world and the true reality for an ideologist is some social-political aim, so the way towards the goal, or the ideological route, might vary alongside with the changes in the landscape. It appears, then, that two other socio-cultural aspects of myth may appear in mass culture; the political aspect of myth (Flood 2001, Levkieskaja 2005) and the normative aspect (myth in legal reality) (Bachinin et al. 2003). I will return to examine them in the case studies in the following chapters.

Since myth works as means for removing imperfections in the opposition me/world, and it is so fluid-bounded that this opposition can be transformed to the opposition me/society, it is obvious that myth plays important role for identity-construction. Van Leeuwen (2005: 149) alleges that “advertising style developed not just to sell products and services but also to model the identities and values of consumer society. It was the first ‘corporate’ language variety, and it played a key role in what Fairclough (1993) has called the ‘marketisation’ of discourse”. For example, beauty industry uses mythology translating it through mass culture discourse. Wolf (2002[1990]: 14) notes that “the beauty myth is always actually prescribing behavior not appearance”. Deconstructing “the beauty myth” within the framework of feminist studies, she claims that the beauty myth in mass cultural industry consists of unacceptability of “natural” or “raw” codes of women in culture (ibid., 269), so that those codes should be transformed into appropriate “cooked” ones (as Lévi-Strauss would say) in diverse aspects such as religion, sex or hunger. This Wolf’s anthropological observation gives an important perspective to cultural/natural aspect of myth within mass culture (social reality) in the structural-semiotical outlook.

Participating in “public spectacle” (Debord 1994[1967]), human being with his/her own existential interrogations encounters capitalist order, acquires social identity and finds his/her own place again and again on the threshold of freedom and social order, his/her inner desires and from outside expectations of society. One of the most burning issues emerging from this matter is social identity and, even more so, gender construction. Mass culture myth often occurs as an explication of eternal male/female opposition and other socio-cultural issues such as wealth and poverty, good luck and misfortune and others. Holt finds mass culture myth to be the alternative life to undisclosed opportunities for overcoming the discrepancies of reality:

The aspirations expressed in these myths are in imaginative rather than literal, expression of the audience’s aspired identity. Identity myths are useful fabrications that stitch back together otherwise damaging tears in the cultural fabric of the nation. In their everyday lives, people experience these tears as personal anxieties. Myths smooth over these tensions, helping people create purpose in their lives and cement their desired identity in place when it is under stress. (Holt 2003: 8)

To sum up, myth is a part and parcel of social life that is also an important aspect of mass culture myth. Unlike ideology, myth helps individual to overcome existential discrepancies of the opposition individual/ nature and it is directed from inside out; from individual to social life. Other aspects of myth also constitute its social entity; naturally, myth plays an important role in social and political identity construction and it surfaces within normativity dynamics in legal reality.

### 2.1.3 Myth and the structural perspective

While the structural-semiotic perspective to myth correlates with existential, socio-cultural and ontological aspects of this phenomenon, it mostly serves as a bridge to epistemological search of mass culture mythology. It was Claude Lévi-Strauss who established the structural-anthropological approach to the ontology of myth. In his book, “Structural anthropology” (1958), the French anthropologist proved myth’s connection to the unconscious principle and determined myth as “an objectively existent structure, code of a priori common to all mankind senses, paradigm of existence” (Lévi-Strauss 2001[1958]: 59). Without disparaging the contribution of Lévi-Strauss to myth studies, one may find it fair enough to challenge the notions of *objectiveness* and *a priori senses* regarding myth entity. While I will not go deeply into the discussion of a priori forms, I am hereby inclined to argue that it should rather say *shared meanings* (not objective and not a priori) that concern myth within culture because myth is situated within semiosphere, which is in itself a space of shared meanings.

At the same time, it is impossible to overstress the importance of Lévi-Strauss’ ideas for further exploration of common and widespread structures of mythological narratives, although Propp had already elaborated several insights regarding narrative structure by that time. Further searches for universal structures within mythological narratives were carried out within literature and culture studies by many researchers. Freidenberg, Meletinsky, Ivanov and Toporov, J.Lotman, Uspensky, Barthes, Greimas, Floch, Kyrlyuk, just to name a few, importantly continued the tradition of the structuralist-semiotic studies. Although their approaches to myth differ, they do reveal a broader perspective to myth, rather than treating it merely as an archaic phenomenon. Within this framework, myth has been also treated as a type of thinking and thus also taking different forms in contemporary texts. That set of approaches provides an opportunity to study myth within the dynamics of the post-structural framework as well. I will regard as the most important those methodological ideas, which show epistemological potential of mass culture mythology studies. Inasmuch as this research is focused on mass culture, I begin with Barthes’ structural-semiotic perspective on mass culture myth.

Barthes considers Daniel Bell’s definition of mass culture as a specific sign system of mind framing/organization (Bell 2000[1964]). However, unlike Bell, Barthes in his “Mythologies” treats mass culture as a communicative system that is ideologically saturated itself and consequently elaborates the notion of mass culture mythology in this framework. Urging to challenge everything that seems obvious, Barthes concludes that mass culture in general nearly always transmits myth. Therewith, the type of its medium is of no importance; that is to say, both public message or a photograph might cover a latent meaning (1977[1957]: 11). The Barthesian concept of mass culture mythology specifies its linguistic essence and extends its treatment within the framework of

semiological approach<sup>16</sup>. To Barthes, myth always appears on the secondary level regarding natural language, or at the level of connotation. In other words, myth is revealed from the context of any text. This idea is commonly used in semiological research of applied marketing to this day. From my point of view, the main limitation of this idea lies in the equation of myth and connotation. According to this strategy, anything appearing on connotative level might be equated to myth. That leads to a confusion of the notions and to reducing myth entity to a sort of supplementary instrument. For example, by the same logic myth can be equated to brand, as in the research of Abadzhimarina [2006: 170] who considers brand as a connotation of a physical commodity. Constituting the secondary level of the narrative, brand communication “can lead all the importance and utility of the product, the full force of the desire to own it and all the emotional depths of satisfaction from its use to the removal of this finding as a fact, making this fact and all thoughts and feelings associated with it, just an objective observation” (ibid., 171).

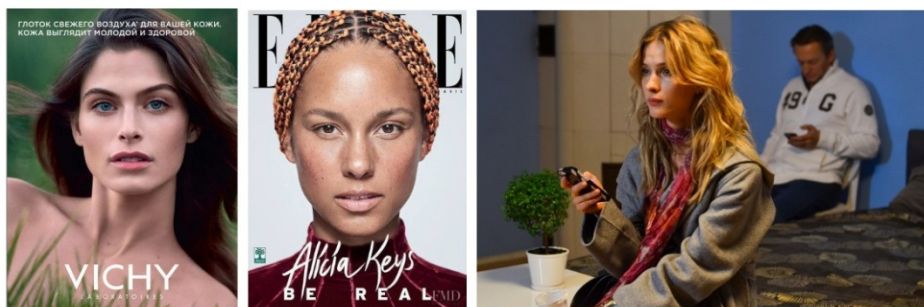
With regard to mass culture mythology, I suggest understanding the Barthes’ scheme in the following manner. In the semiological perspective, visual signs, images, and verbal texts of different genres (movies, advertisements, video-clips) constitute combinations based on one of their common connotations and can represent shared abstract ideas such as “beauty”, “frenchness”, “naturalness” (in relation to food), “well-being”, etc., which are cultural codes. For example, a model with a nude makeup and tangled hair in the advertising of a beauty-products brand, a model without a make-up and with a caption “Be real” on the cover of the famous fashion magazine or a female protagonist in famous TV-series who is successful, attractive by plot who wears a relaxed outfit without high heels, and does not wear tidy hairstyle nor makeup are bearers of the code of *natural beauty* (Fig.2). The connotation of beauty is constituted by 1) the genre of the medium: beauty industry (we see a sign-index, how we will look like when we buy these beauty products; 2) by credibility of the medium: since *Elle* is one of the most famous magazines about fashion and beauty, it *means* that its cover is the concentration of these ideas; 3) through interaction of the protagonist in her world: she is a positive protagonist, attractive for men, she is successful in her world, she can be a bearer of an credible role model and appearance for an audience. The connotation of *naturalness* can appear either from the additional markers of the message: the model is depicted in the piece of nature (green background, grass on the foreground, she is naked); there is a caption “Be real” near the image, the female antagonist has all the signs of *artificial beauty*. Alternatively, it can appear from the context: if we compare our protagonist with the female-protagonists of the other TV-series, the latter are wearing high-heels in everyday life, have perfect make-up, manicure, ideal hairstyle, and fashionable accessories.

---

<sup>16</sup> We should also take into account that Barthes was dwelling on this issue during his early research period when he was particularly occupied by idea of elaborating the semiology project as a universal science studying all sign systems as languages.



As such, they represent a cluster of values and characteristics, which might be attributed to any object of culture. In applied marketing semiotics, cultural codes are used to describe a dynamics of culture regarding certain cultural categories such as beauty, masculinity, success, etc. The cultural code is a form, which can reveal *contemporary mythological ideas* and can conceal *universal mythological elements*.



**Figure 2.** Banner of *Vichy* brand, cover of *Elle*<sup>17</sup> magazine and a footage of *Test Na Beremennost* TV series (Russia, 2014).

I will hereby provide an example of the correlation between cultural codes constituting an inner dynamics of mass culture mythology. For this purpose, I will generalize a case study by Grinshpun (2014) about consumer practices of coffee drinking in coffee shops in Japan. Coffee shops as being in service of coffee drinking (which together constitute a mass culture practice) have been associated with cultural code of “westernness” since the early 20th century, according to Grinshpun (ibid, 349). Here “westernness” serves as an umbrella term (cultural metaphor) of different values in different periods. In the early 20th century, “westernness” discovered idea of exotics that was represented by jazz and cabaret erotica as usual elements of service in coffee shops. In the 1960–70s, “westernness” discovered the value of emancipation that was represented by avant-garde art, feminist and political protests against the US-Japan Security Treaty actions. Since the turn of the 20th and the 21st centuries “westernness” of coffee-drinking practice has discovered “normal, ordinary life” as a value, which was adopted by the Starbucks coffee-shops brand. Nowadays “westernness” represented by such markers as Roman characters/katakana<sup>18</sup> used for denomination (“roast”, “blend”, “aroma”, etc.), by wrapping/packaging the coffee cups as endurable and doing it in a recognizable pattern, and by celebrating traditional western holidays such as St.Valentine’s day and

<sup>17</sup> Official page of Elle Brasil from September 1, 2017. Accessed 29.08.2019: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BYeVqUIBnWZ/?hl=en&taken-by=ellebrasil>

<sup>18</sup> Katakana is Japanese writing system used for borrowed words.

Halloween in their coffee shops. In addition, another value connoted by “westernness” is conjoined union and own control represented by specific types of public spaces in Starbucks coffee shops (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Inner dynamics of mass culture mythology.

	Early 20th century	1960–1970s	1990s-onwards
Culture code (connotation)	“exotic westernness”	“emansipating westernness”	“casual westernness”
	Value: search for exotics	Value: emancipation	Value: normal life, union + control
Markers	jazz, cabaret erotics	avant-garde art, feminist and political protest actions	Roman letters/katakana, “wrapping”/packaging, new types of public spaces

In this case, “westernness” can be treated as a contemporary myth appearing by way of certain mass culture practices (practice of drinking coffee in coffee-shops). What is more, it can be found not only within Japanese local culture but in other cultures as well. Accordingly, “westernness” can be revealed by diversely different narratives, which reveal different values (drinking coffee while watching a cabaret show in the 1930s represented exotic “westernness”, while negotiations with business partners via Skype, or working with a laptop in a Starbucks coffee shop while drinking a “double espresso” in the 2010s, represents “normal life-style” value). Nevertheless, “westernness” can be treated a mass culture mythological idea inasmuch it undiscloses a form of a deeper universal mythological constituent which is Otherness. It emerges from the ontological dichotomy of Local/Foreign and from the existential dichotomy of Self/Other. Acquiring contemporary form of “westernness” (including ideological, political, and ludic constituents), this mass culture mythological entity preserves its existential universal essence.

In my view, the equation of connotative level and myth can be feasible when myth is interpreted in a narrow sense as some additional idea equal to cultural code. In this research, I consider the connotative level of mass culture messages and texts just as a space where mythological elements can appear; still, I am inclined to argue that mythology is not an omnipresent and obligatory constituent of every message. To put it in other words, every myth exists at connotative level, but not every connotation is a myth. To a large extent, my position is influenced by the wider perspective of semiotics of myth represented in the Tartu-Moscow school.

J.Lotman and Uspensky, in particular, discussed the issue of mythological mind and its inherent categories. According to J.Lotman, this type of mind is atemporal and can indeed become apparent nowadays: “elements of mythological mind can be found out in everyday verbal conduct of the modern civilized society” (Lotman 1973: 282–283). For J.Lotman and Uspensky (1973: 284), mythological semiosis represents a naming process; also, an important matter is that for myth word is always predominant in distinction from actions. Mythological mind, in this perspective, is treated as being monolingual and mythological texts as auto-communicative. This means that universality of myth consists of its appeal to anybody. In other words, myth ultimately communicates interpretations of universal phenomena such as birth and death, or universal existentials, such as fear or love. That explains well why all mythological systems since Ancient times have so much in common in their universal grounds.

Sergey Nekliudov, another representative of the Tartu-Moscow tradition of myth studies, argues that the ground of the “mythological world picture” is a specific space and time (mythological chronotope), and an idea about cosmos, chaos and overcoming of the latter (2005: 12). In addition, mythological space is principally non-homogeneous; it contains the sacral centre and potentially antagonistic periphery (ibid., 12). This space is abrupt and divided by plethora of boundaries that are fragile and flexible, depending on day and calendar time. The same insights about the patchiness of mythological space were expressed by J.Lotman and Uspensky (1973). Moreover, this description of “mythological world picture” is similar to J.Lotmanian description of semiosphere; that is, mythological world picture constitutes a specific semiosphere. When we recall Ancient mythological systems, all of them had a centre of their own cosmos together with a pantheon of gods, as well as anti-cosmos represented by chthonic creatures. By analogy, mythological centre constituting the gravity of mass culture semiosphere, may be found in mosaic “mass cultural pantheon” represented in the figures of Santa Claus with Coca-Cola, Harry Potter, Starbucks coffee cup and in the image of a bitten Apple, as well as in many other constituents such as “westernness” (as mass culture deriving from American/western culture). Accordingly, *in the structural-semiotic perspective, mass culture mythology is represented by elements, which play a function of cultural translation in order to incorporate several texts within semiosphere of mass culture and to build mass culture as an integral sub semiosphere of contemporary culture.*

Nekliudov (2005: 12–13) exemplifies that there are universal psycho-physiological mechanisms that produce mythological structures by drawing a parallel to contemporary everyday perception of space that consists of fragments differing from each other not only by physical but also by mystic qualities that have quasi-scientific explanations, for example, positive or negative energetic. What is more, he also argues that this phenomenon derives from the basic experiencing of the egocentric position of a cognizer, to whom

the space around is construed as concentric zones.<sup>19</sup> That well demonstrates the auto-communicative nature of myth as it forms a space around subject talking to subject. Nekliudov also argues that periphery in the mythological perception, and thus in mythological text, is not necessary “the other” but clearly “un-mastered yet” (2005: 13). Naturally, this type of perception cannot be set as a unique mythological perception of time and space; nevertheless mythological texts cannot be recognized as such if they do not contain reflections of universal model of the world.

At the same time, this type of reflection depends on dynamics of culture, because in different cultures the embodiment of the Universe model varies and derives from discourse; what remains common in the ontological model of Universe, is not reflection of objective reality, but production of thinking. When it comes to the model that derives from mythological thinking, this model curiously reflects common structure in different cultures.

Zubko (2012: 18) argues that mythological universals are common features of myths belonging to different cultural traditions and they are related to the core of myth. She also insists that “the most important for understanding the nature of Myth are those that belong to the most archaic layers” (ibid., 2012: 19). Those universals usually reflect the world picture of different culture; *the origin of the world* (ibid., 19–20), *cyclicity of the world* (Eliade 1959), *flood* and salvation of “righteous” people (Zubko 2012: 20), and *the lost paradise* universal (ibid., 21). Zubko also insists that world-wide disasters are often connected to *destructive fire* (ibid., 21)<sup>20</sup>. She also separates such universal units as *world order or sacred law* (ibid., 22), *principle of duality* (ibid., 22–25), *vital substance* (ibid., 25–26), *divine origin* of human being (ibid., 26–27), *sacral essence of number* (ibid., 28), and others.

In the expression level and thus for tracing the markers of this perception, the notion of *deixis*<sup>21</sup> which “accounts for the semiotic markers that implicate the subject or self in the space-time of the discourse” (Oswald 2015: 31–32) could be used. Such loci of mythological space-time were described by the notion of *heterotopia*, which are special places where “all the real arrangements that are typically found within society are simultaneously represented, challenged, and overturned” (Foucault 1985: 12), since semiosis is deployed in non-linear space-time as aptly notices Laura Oswald (2015: 31). Good examples for this could be Disneyland as “American heterotopia” (Armstrong

---

<sup>19</sup> Remarkably, contemporary physicist and cosmologist Nesteruk (2012) justifies the same idea by treating the perception of the whole Universe and individual’s place in the cosmological model the same way as J.Lotman (2000a[1992]) views the model of culture itself, which is an interesting example of intersection between the ideas of semiotics, theoretical physics, and cosmology.

<sup>20</sup> I will discuss it further in comparison with the same fantastic ideas in mass culture of present time (e.g. “Armageddon”, “The Fifth Element” movies).

<sup>21</sup> The notion of *deixis*, coined by Karl Ludwig Bühler and elaborated by Émile Benveniste, along with theory of discourse and communicative grammar of language, signified a turn towards anthropocentric linguistics.

1998: 526) or Starbucks coffee shop in *yuka* space<sup>22</sup> as Japanese heterotopia, which can be also defined as “borrowed landscape” – “bringing in imageries from other cultural contexts” (Grinshpun 2014: 357). For the mythological mind it is a simultaneous transfer to another culture in a situation where space and time are mythologically patchy and abrupt.

Apparently, a semiotic clue to myth appearance in contemporary culture is in its universal structures as a form of material organization. Kyrylyuk (2008, 2014) has thoroughly elaborated the instrumental application of those insights to cultural texts in general and to mythological texts in particular. The Ukrainian philosopher offered a structural-semiotic approach to the universal grounds of human culture represented in his theory of *Weltanschauung Categories of Ultimate Bases* (WCUB). Influenced by Hegelian dialectics and structuralist theory, he claims that there are three WCUB, which are vital (*life*<sup>23</sup>), mortal (*death*), and immortal (*immortality*) categories (Kyrylyuk 2008: 227)<sup>24</sup>, and which represent the basic *Weltanschauung* formula of “birth-life-death-immortality” (Kyrylyuk 2014: 5). This formula can be found in all cultural texts inasmuch they describe dialectics of human life. Mythological narratives are particular cases of the manifestation of those universal categories of worldview (Kyrylyuk 1996). The philosopher argues further that the three WCUB are related to the universal human idea of dialectical overcoming of “death” (in wide cultural and semiotic sense, death as an idea). According to Kyrylyuk’s approach, *death* can be treated as a universal holistic cultural and semiotic category, which defines the border between *life* as an initial situation of existence and some new dialectical level of existence for the same subject. Being the border of a dialectical shift, death as a cultural semiotic category is always a point of cultural “pain” (Fig. 3).



**Figure 3.** *Weltanschauung* Categories of Ultimate Bases (Kyrylyuk 2008)

In a sense, mythological narratives are usually full of schemes about painless overcoming of the *death* point that is related to the idea of miracle, for example.

In my opinion, Kyrylyuk’s theory provides applicable solutions for analysing mythological narratives in general and mass culture mythology in parti-

<sup>22</sup> A traditional type of restaurant serving local cuisine, the attraction typical for the old Kyoto down-town (Grinshpun 2014: 357–358).

<sup>23</sup> Life, death and immortality are considered here in a general philosophical and anthropological sense.

<sup>24</sup> Reflecting upon mass culture mythological narrative, Pivoev’s point seems to be suitable, for he notes: “death is a shift of a status” (*Mythological consciousness as a World Cognition Way*, 77).

cular. Therefore, I will return to his model after reflecting on the ontology of mass culture mythology.

## 2.2 Mythology of mass culture: the ontology

After having examined the background for ontological issues of mass culture and mythology in the first and the second subchapters, I will make an attempt to synthesize the concept of mass culture mythology as an entire model.

Mythological mindset in general is a peculiar way of experiencing reality; it is a universal anthropological aptitude situated on a verge between intuition and rational awareness of the world. Most likely it is even impossible to get rid of this ability of mythological perception of the world alongside with rational mind. Regarding the main ontological principles of culture organization, mythological mind *translates* discrete reality to be perceived as a continual reality. This means that fully semiotic mechanisms constitute mythological reality. “Myth provides a ‘euphoric clarity’ by eliminating complexities and contradictions” (Mosco 2004: 30); it is achieved by smoothing the discrepancies between an individual and “nature”. In the epochs of crises, the relevancy of mythological translation increases directly-proportionally to the amount of informational unpredictability, as mythological mind triggers as an inner stabilizer of human being within such circumstances.

As Greimas has fittingly observed, “the world can be treated as ‘human world’ inasmuch as it means something” (2004[1966]: 5). It is hardly worth mentioning that beyond the meaning-making process myth cannot exist at all. If myth appeared at the background of nature, contemporary myth existed also at the background of mass culture. Mosaic environment of mass culture is a new urban nature. Expanding noise of the multiplication of mass culture forms disorients human being as it eventually decreases their significance and increases informational entropy. Myth as a cultural universal plays the role of the inner principle of integration that turns scattered set of forms into existentially meaningful continuum. Moreover, as mass culture is omnipresent environment of everyday life, people often immerse in its continuum even unintentionally:

the world of our immediate experience [...] when not engaged in conscious, critical-scientific reflection, can only be designated as mythical – most particularly, the concept of causality, the general concept of force, which must pass through the mythical intuition of efficacy before dissolving in the mathematical-logical concept of function. (Cassirer 1955[1923–1929]: 15)

Reflecting on inner processes of human brain and meaning-making process, Ivanov (1998[1978]: 451) argues that uniting two types of writing (i.e. hieroglyphic script and syllabic writing), Japanese culture demonstrates “double standards” and willingness that European and American technology would preserve ancient traditions that are preserved in subconscious. Also, in this

respect, following Lévi-Strauss, Ivanov argues that Japanese society is “a unique industrial society preserving live mythological mind” (ibid., 451). I would like to extend this insight to mass culture as a form of contemporary culture, which unites syllabic language/languages and hieroglyphic script in the broad sense. Mass culture is a creative space saturated by puzzles of creolized signs (e.g. *smushi*<sup>25</sup>). Mass culture creolized signs appear as combination within one and between different types of modelling systems (visual, audial, kinaesthetic, taste, olfactory, e.g. in 5D-cinema).

In summarizing the insights on general mythological mechanisms, I will outline the most important features of the ontological dimension of mass culture mythology.

1) Mass culture mythology constructs its own reason-consequential linkage. Unlike empirical thinking, the physics in myth “takes every contact in time and space as an immediate relation of cause and effect” (Cassirer 1955[1923–29]: 45). Cassirer adds that mythical thinking is characterized by principles of post hoc, ergo propter hoc and juxta hoc, ergo propter hoc. In this way “animals which appear in a certain season are, for example, commonly looked upon as the bringers, the cause of this season: for the mythical view, it is the swallow that makes the summer” (ibid., 45). This strategy works both in archaic and modern narratives enfolding the sequence of events as reason-consequential linkage, in this manner mass culture broadcasts ideas about New Year/Christmas bringing miracles, St.Valentine’s day bringing love, horoscopes interpreting character/relations and astronomic objects predicting destiny etc.

2) The mythological world of mass culture is strongly anthropocentric. It demonstrates the phenomena associated to human experience, animating even technological inventions to be understandable. There are speaking TV-sets, refrigerators and other devices, also animals in commercials, cartoons and movies. There are markers in everyday discourse such as “battery is dead”, “mobile is dying”, “sleep mode” and so on and so forth. Moreover, even the mythological structuring of mass culture discourse into binary oppositions has anthropocentric origin; for example. J.Lotman and Ivanov argue that our body determines left/right oppositions. That is also a general peculiarity of semiotic systems, as “semiosis builds upon the tensions between opposing terms of binary” (Oswald 2012: 29). Besides, this fact has important epistemological inference, as grasping binary oppositions themselves is one of the main methodological tools of mythological studies.

3) Mass culture mythology constructs world picture with proper names. Naming is an archaic practice of comprehension and mastering of environment. The circulating assemblage of texts, commodities, practices and facilities does not have meaning unless it is not habitualized. “We are going to a fast-food restaurant” is just stating a fact of dining out, while “We are going to MacDonald’s” is a promise to visit a mythological space of family holiday. Every brand tries to become recognisable by its name. When the space/object is

---

<sup>25</sup> *Smushi* is combination of “smørrebrød”, or “smart sandwich”, and “sushi” in Dutch.

“named”, it is familiar for one; it is habitualized in anthropological sense. This means that it was translated, became typical and thus was dropped to the centre of the mass culture semiosphere.

4) Mass culture mythology possesses its own chronotope. It seems that mosaic entity of mass culture (unlike archaic mythology) challenges the integrality of myth manifestations. Barthes (1977[1957]: 165) suggests: “Contemporary myth is discontinuous. It is no longer expressed in long fixed narratives but only in ‘discourse’; at most, it is phraseology, a corpus of phrases (of stereotypes)”. Without doubt, contemporary culture is no longer time of extended mythological systems as dominant world picture but appears in a bricolage form (in term of Lévi-Strauss). Despite the disruptiveness of its forms, the ontological integrity of mythology is provided by the peculiar mythological chronotope, which appears as contradictory to empirical space and time. Along with the fragmentedness of mythological space (Lotman 1973), mythological time is also discrete and reversible. Mythological chronotope always represents a form of some other reality. “Being feared of death, human beings would always believe in the eternity, to the existence beyond time the same way as mythological time always used to exist beyond calendar time” (Ivanov 2007[1973]: 223).

Unlike the archaic settled and cyclic mythological time, the mass culture mythological time reflects both cyclic time of traditional society and “nonlinear time of industrial life” as it is defined by Maxim Karpovets, Ukrainian researcher on urban anthropology (2014: 205). Being an atypical principle of rational reasoning, this ontological principle of mass culture mythology mostly correlates with the first of those mentioned above.

These main principles together, and their dialectical dynamics, constitute the whole mechanism of mass culture mythology. Although I demonstrated several examples, those principles are foremost ontological, while mass culture mythology time has precise manifestation.

*Forms of mass culture mythology.* On the one hand, mythology in mass culture appears as a principle of organization of the latter and structuring it as holistic semiosphere; in other words, mythology of mass culture appears as *secondary modelling system, or language of culture*. Formally it is difficult to grasp and can be thus represented by the elements dialectically penetrating different texts and fulfilling function of their cultural translation in order to build mass culture as an integral semiosphere (sub-semiosphere of contemporary culture). The structural units of myth, images, and umbrella cultural categories revealing existential meanings are possible paradigmatic objectivations of such elements. On the other hand, there are entire *texts* as another possible manifestation of mass culture mythology, which can be represented by contemporary texts or allusions to archaic residual texts. I am focusing here on revealing patterns of mass culture mythology as predominantly language and not on compiling holistic anthology of mythological texts of mass culture. However, I would still like to give a few examples of possible mass culture mythological manifestation in form of entire texts.



Nekliudov (2005: 17) argues that myth can be encoded in every cultural text; meanwhile the type of coding depends on diversity of cultural texts. Accordingly, mythology of traditional societies is easily found within folklore texts containing magic, ritual elements; there are also artistic texts revealing the same plots on artistic meta-level, or academic texts describing mythology. Being collective memory, culture preserves traits of the past, as the whole mechanism of culture is inseparable continuum. In the epochs of classicism and baroque, ancient mythological plots were used as bases for operas, paintings and other genres of arts. Similarly, contemporary culture preserves components of archaic mythological texts and introduces them into contemporary texts.

What first comes to mind when it is said “mythology of mass culture” is that there are some ancient narratives appearing in mass culture forms, which can indeed be found. In a way, the influence of ancient texts on mass culture is evident, not least because mass culture texts are usually created with exploitation of well-recognized images and plots (Venus, Nike, angels, water of life, etc.), quotations or allusions to ancient mythological narratives (i.e. *Hercules in New York* (1970), *Xena: Warrior Princess* TV-series (1995–2000), *Troy* (2004) and *Astérix aux Jeux olympiques* (2008), to name only a few texts) in order to attract attention and create an image of familiarity or some fictional artistic time-space.

At the same time, mass culture appears to be a fruitful environment for the emergence of new mythological texts, which are initially fictional narratives becoming widespread, like “Star Wars” (Leguil 2015; Scheid, Ortolí 2015), “Pokemons” (Buckingham and Sefton-Green 2003; Buckingham 2007), “Avatar” (Semenenko 2012: 84), or “World of the Rings”, “Harry Potter”, which contain strong worldview systems inside as the text.

I argue that the both types of texts can be regarded as mythological ones within mass culture inasmuch they fulfil the function of building mass culture semiosphere, which includes social practices, language of commodities (including brand narratives) and narratives about them, and companies and other representatives of mass culture market. Otherwise they could be named as just fictional texts. For example, “Harry Potter” novels and their different adaptations (films, games, merchandise, etc.) and allusions (e.g. L. Weisberger’s novel “The Devil Wears Prada”, 2003) vs. any other book written by an English author in 1997.

Finally, I would like to trace the possible location of mass culture mythology within semiosphere, since the notion of semiosphere reflects the dialectics of meaning-making process of people. When we imagine entire culture as a spiral rotating around time axis, mythological elements penetrate different cultural texts from the bottom upwards. Being universal of culture, mythological elements “gravitate” towards the centre (bottom) of entire semiosphere, which includes the most ancient, different texts throughout entire history, and contemporary forms of their manifestation.

Historically, mass cultural texts appeared at the periphery of culture as a new genre and form; that is why mass culture evoked so much critique especially

from academic community. Every new form of culture is always marginal, unfamiliar and “dangerous”. Being eventually saturated with existential meanings, mass culture gained mythological elements and, thus, its gravitation towards the centre of semiosphere (typicality of cultural forms)

## 2.3 Findings

To sum up, I apply the notion of *mass culture mythology* as a mechanism of mass culture integration around its existential meanings. Accordingly, mass culture mythology is not only a text (form), it is also an explication of existential cultural universal that goes beyond the concept of text. In logical scope of notions, mass culture mythology appears in overlapping of language as communicative system and text as a sign or coherent system of signs (in J.Lotmanian perspective) within semiosphere of culture. The dialectics of mythological manifestation deploys in its appearance both in static form of text dynamics of language. The latter fulfils the function of translation within culture, appearing on inner and external boundaries of semiosphere (translating phenomena of other cultures, societies or even worlds) and between semiotic and non-semiotic space (semiosphere, inner and outer space of individual semiosphere). In this way, mass culture mythology mediates such social issues as identity construction and discrepancies in political reality by using the same means as existential interrogation towards world and society.

Without doubt, myth as text can be found in different fields of semiosphere, primarily as archaic mythological texts preserved to this day and particularly mythological texts (archaic and contemporary texts, in comparison to fictional) within mass culture. Myth has been treated differently in the course of the history. It can be considered as a text and a metaconcept or cultural universal. Since there are no current extended mythological systems like those of Ancient Greece or Shumers, mass culture can be compared with them in several respects. Mass culture is a relatively recently emerged sub-field of culture and widespread mondial subsystem of culture that can be represented as a set of texts.

Due to the inner mythological mechanism of organization, and the compendium of texts as consistent system, it appears as a separate semiosphere comparable with the mythological systems of Ancient times. The mythological mechanism represents some symbolic language partially reflecting existential oscillations between nature and culture oppositions. Surely, there is nothing integral in contemporary culture; it contains many competitive forms for our attention, however, as contemporary culture with increasing amount of information becomes ever more mosaic, fragmented and patch-like, there occur more fruitful zones for myth manifestation. It contains no myths about gods, heroes and stories of the origin of Universe; still, the eternal interrogations are deployed in new narratives where contemporary gods and heroes, so as new stories of the origin of Universe appear. Philosophical, cultural and

anthropological- methodological attitudes help grasping mythology of mass culture within context but the semiotic outlook is an insightful way to analyse its manifestation.

I am of opinion that epistemologically it can be grasped through consistent mechanism of structural units, since I consider mass culture mythology within semiotic framework. The next chapter will be dedicated to the epistemological position of mass culture mythology's inner machinery.

## **SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS I**

In this Chapter, I considered an ontological aspect of mass culture mythology through different theoretical frameworks. In comparison to entire human culture representing the whole of the integrity of the 40-thousands-years-old human semiosis, mass culture is a relatively young form of cultural development. Despite it having appeared more than a century ago, it maintains its relevance nowadays and becomes a basis for new dimensions of culture (digital, trans-medial, consumer culture). Within the framework of general emancipatory philosophical-anthropological perspective, mass culture appears as a semiotic space and meaningful environment. It is constituted by diversity of commodities, services and facilities of their production, as well as daily and regular social practices, which become possible in relation to them, and consequently create a certain way of life of a modern human being.

The sociological outlook on mass culture demonstrates mass culture to be a field for the construction of identities within consumerism implying economic, financial, political and social relationship that correlates with a function of mythology as a social regulator. The philosophical and anthropological outlook elaborate the existential layer behind the matter. It discovers the inner motivation and existential issues hidden in mass culture; human being appears as its creator. The semiotic outlook shows how mass culture functions as a communicative system and indicates the location of myth within mass culture.

The heuristic idea of J.Lotman to consider culture as a semiosphere provides an important perspective to understand mass culture as a subsystem of the entire semiosphere. From this perspective, mass culture may be seen as a semiosphere with a peculiar inner organization. Mass culture mythology is an inner secondary-modelling system, a mechanism of organization of mass culture texts into a consistent system. Due to the mythological mechanism, the mosaic discrete environment becomes a meaningful continual world full of existential values, which are comprehensible to everyone. Thus, entire mass culture appears as a semiosphere (or sub-semiosphere of the entire culture) similar to ancient mythological system.

The ontology of mass culture mythology, deriving from treatment of myth as cultural universal, can be deduced as a principle of organization and structuring of mass culture in integral semiosphere. This principle reveals itself in the four main ontological aspects of mass culture mythology: peculiar reason-con-

sequential linkage, anthropocentricity, specific mythological chronotope and “naming” as habitualization).

In the structural-semiotic perspective, mass culture mythology is represented by forms, which play a function of cultural translation in order to incorporate several texts into the semiosphere of mass culture preserving culture-semiotic “gravity” towards its centre. Those forms are represented by full texts/narratives and separate elements penetrating different texts such as images, umbrella cultural categories, and structural units, where the latter are the most consistent elements. Commonly known mythological images in mass culture are mostly formal shatters of ancient mythological integral systems constituting the most evident clusters of meanings and allusions to Ancient texts (mythological gods, heroes, angels and other actors, ideas about the origin and the end of the world). Cultural categories are umbrella-like abstract representations of several clusters of values and characteristics, which might be attributed to any object/text of mass culture. They are less evident mythological elements as they do not have a precise form and disclose themselves only after their gradual speculative decoding (“westernness”/ “foreignness”/ otherness). They can be treated as mythological inasmuch (1) they reveal existential meanings and correspond to main principles of mythological mind; (2) they participate in constitution of integral semiosphere of mass culture. Structural units of myth preserve their sustainability in union with external form and inherent content. That is why they possess epistemological-heuristic potential.

The main function of mass culture mythology from the philosophical and anthropological point of view is to decrease level of unpredictability and preserve the model of the “universe”, individual’s identity and the integrity of the world-view in circumstances of (in a sense inescapable) of mosaic cultural environment.

## II. STRUCTURAL UNITS OF MASS CULTURE MYTHOLOGY

This chapter dwells on specification and analysis of the third possible form of mass culture mythology as semiotic mechanism. In the first subchapter, I validate theoretical premises of inner structural units of myth and in the second subchapter I analyze the manifestation of several structural units in mass culture in depth. For this purpose, I examine any types of messages within mass culture communication, which can be seen as commercial messages: phototypography, logotypes of commodities, narratives on brands and meta-texts on them, actions, flashmobs, performances, movies, political messages and other texts. My strategy is to find such structural units of myth which represent universal mythological meanings at the level of connotation that are atemporal but evolve themselves in peculiar contemporary forms, and in mass cultural discourse in general, as a contemporary context. Finally, I demonstrate a possible mechanism of their articulation in mass culture discourse and disclose the ways consumers grasp them (de-commoditization and valorization).

### 1. MYTHOLOGEMES AND MYTHEMES

#### 1.1 Introduction of the terms

According to neuroscientific research, people are conscious of only about 5 percent of their cognitive activity, which means that most of human decisions, actions, emotions, and behaviour depends on the 95 percent of brain activity that goes on beyond conscious awareness (Szegedy-Maszak 2005 in Hazeldine 2013:11). Grasping structural units of mythology is an important procedure for understanding the hidden triggers of unconscious involved in mass culture.

Since the beginning of comparative studies of myth, researchers have paid attention to the recurring elements of mythological systems and mythological narratives. Despite of chronological or geographical distance, certain inner elements of myth appeared as universal, typical and consistent units. These used to be called as archetypes (Jung, Kerényi 1996[1941]), units of myth (Lévi-Strauss 1963[1958]) or universals of myth (Zubko 2012), but most commonly they have been called as mythologemes and mythemes. Both concepts were originally introduced in the second third of the 20th century. I apply the term *structural units of myth* as an umbrella concept for both mythologemes and mytheme in order to emphasize their general structural-semiotic and epistemological character.

Primarily, the concept of *mythologeme* derives from Carl Jung's and Carl Kerényi's work "Introduction to the essence of myth" (Jung and Kerényi 1996[1941]: 13). The researchers used this term for determining mythological plots, scenes and images characterised by their universality; in other words, that were widespread in different cultures. However, Kerényi's strategy sheds light on the ambivalent nature of this concept. Consequently, it can be considered not

only as a final or finished product (form), but also as a matter for the emergence of new meaning (content). Kerényi compared mythologemes with music which both can be perceived and explained. Nevertheless, the authors emphasize the peculiarity of the mythologeme in the following manner: “In a true mythologeme this meaning is not something that could be expressed just as well and just as fully in a non-mythological way” (Kerényi 2002[1941]: 4).

What is more, Jung and Kerényi equally applied the concept of mythological archetype. Jung pointed out that he had borrowed his term archetype from classical sources (Cicero, Pliny, the Corpus Hermeticum, Augustine and others) (Campbell 2008[1949]: 18). Archetype became a widespread notion in psychoanalytical theory and in culture studies later. Jung defines it as “Forms or images of a collective nature which occur practically all over the earth as *constituents* (Italics mine – L.Z.) of myths and at the same time as individual products of unconscious origin” (Jung 1960[1938]: 63). Mark and Pearson define it in a contemporary manner by saying that “Archetypes are the “software” of the psyche” (2001: 32). Since Jung’s and Kerényi’s approach has been presented in their research distinctively enough, there is no need to discuss this issue here in length. It must be noted, however, that the second concept is more complicated and requires more detailed examination.

The concept of mytheme was first introduced seventeen years later by Lévi-Strauss in his monograph *Anthropologie Structurale* (Lévi-Strauss 1963[1958]). Lévi-Strauss argues with the attitude of Jung and Kerényi taking into consideration that their German psychoanalytic mythologeme was merely a category of myth as language, whereas mythological thinking is neither language nor speech but both intertwined. Lévi-Strauss refers to Saussure’s idea that language is reversible in time while speech is not. He assumes that myth uses a third referent, which combines the properties of the first two. On the one hand, a myth always refers to events allegedly to have taken place long time ago, but what gives the myth an operational value is that the specific pattern described is timelessness; it explains the present and the past as well as the future (ibid., 209). Thus, Lévi-Strauss introduces his own concept, *mytheme*, in order to explain the inner structure of myth. For him, mythemes are gross constituent units that can be “dissected from the level of sentence, and which provide some relation” (ibid., 211). He highlights that “[mythemes] cannot be found among phonemes, morphemes, or sememes, but only on a higher level. Otherwise myth would become confused with any other kind of speech” (ibid., 211). In this conception, myth possesses a specific time, including both “reversible and non-reversible”, and “synchronic and diachronic”. Accordingly, Lévi-Strauss came to the conclusion that,

true constituent units of myth are not the isolated relations but bundles of such relations, and it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce a meaning. Relations pertaining to the same bundle may appear diachronically at remote intervals, but when we have succeeded in grouping them together we have reorganized our myth according to a time referent of a new nature, corresponding to the prerequisite of the initial hypo-

thesis, namely a two-dimensional time referent which is simultaneously diachronic and synchronic, and which accordingly integrates the characteristics of langue on the one hand, and those of parole on the other, to put it in even more linguistic terms, it is as though a phoneme were always made up of all its variants. (ibid., 212).

This idea seems to be crucial in understanding the nature of mytheme in his works. Lévi-Strauss presents us with yet another brilliant illustration of mytheme by way of analogy with harmony in orchestra scores, which have to be read both synchronically and diachronically in order to be meaningful (ibid., 212). He goes on to state that we can dissect mythemes by means of binary pairs or oppositions, which provide the basis of the narrative structure. Lévi-Strauss also emphasizes that mythemes do not have an independent value, because they are structurally related, but the variety of meaningful units (myths) is constructed due to mythemes. In clarifying this matter further, Lévi-Strauss (2000[1964], 2007 [1971], 2001[1978]) compared once again the inner structure of myth with the inner structure of music. In short, his observation can be reflected in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Correspondence of language, music and myth structure by Lévi-Strauss (2001[1978]: 20–24).

	Language	Music	Myth
Sentences	☒	☒	☒
Words	☒		☒
Phoneme	☒	☒	

Lévi-Strauss explains,

If we try to understand the relationship between language, myth and music, we can only do so by using language as the point of departure, and then it can be shown that music on the one hand and mythology on other both stem from languages but grow apart in different directions, that music emphasizes the sound aspect already embedded in language, while mythology emphasizes the sense aspect, the meaning aspect, which is also embedded in language. (Lévi-Strauss 2001[1978]: 23)

Thus, it is an interesting fact that both Jung and Kerényi, as well as Lévi-Strauss, compared myth with music and were inspired to find the smallest structural units of myth. However, now we are faced with the question whether these indeed are the same phenomena or, perhaps, they discuss different units. In the first appro-

ximation, when trying to compare and distinguish between the both concepts, one can notice that both terms possess the suffix -eme marking them as emic units<sup>26</sup> from a linguistic point of view, that is, in other words, both concepts appear as some mythological invariants, or inseparable smallest units of the system at the content level. However, from another angle, since the emic nature of mythologeme seems to be convincing (at least by analogy with lexeme as it appears from Jung's and Kerényi's work), the mytheme does not fit well into this model. It would seem that two puzzles emerge here about mytheme in this respect:

- (1) If, following the Lévi-Strauss' approach, mythemes are bundles of relations, could they possess universality or do they strongly depend on the context of a specific case (narrative)?
- (2) If, according to Lévi-Strauss, we can find mythemes on the syntagmatic level (relations in the sentence), could they remain emic in nature?

These two questions are crucial as they can imply whether mythemes could be considered as analogs of mythologemes. Apparently, unlike mythologemes, mythemes cannot be regarded as merely emic units but as certain hybrids, at least according to Lévi-Strauss' examples. The overall attitude of Lévi-Strauss indicates that the ontology of the mytheme is much more complicated than that of mythologeme. We leave this question open for time being and return to it in the discussion section.

## 1.2 Academic elaboration of the concepts

Both concepts have been successfully adopted in structural linguistics, cultural anthropology, marketing studies, social philosophy, political science, and other fields. However, there has been no extensive theoretical discussion about them in general and within semiotics in particular; at the same time both concepts are constantly mentioned in case studies of myth in different academic fields. Yet, mytheme is mentioned somewhat more often in reference books of semiotics. For instance, one can find it in theoretical chapters such as "Function" and "Narrative" in *Handbook of Semiotics* by Winfried Nöth (Nöth 1995: 184, 370). In one chapter, mytheme is mentioned by way of analogy with other linguistic structures such as motif, motifeme, narreme, minimal narrative, minimal story, and kernel story as "concepts which have been proposed in the search for a minimal constituent of the narrative" (Nöth 1995: 370). Although many scholars frequently apply both concepts, mythologeme has been used more often. It ought to be mentioned that both concepts are quite often used just as given. Nevertheless, I have collected the definitions of these concepts in the instances when they have been specifically explained by the authors. For example, Torchinov defines mythologemes as "mythological units of image and sense" (Torchinov 1998: 35); Lobok sees them as "a general place or idea" (Lobok 1997: 147); Kasavin insists that mythologemes are "any image corresponding to

---

<sup>26</sup> In Pike's sense (Pike 1967).



the assignment of primary systematization of the real vital material” (Kasavin 1990: 8) and Masterov considers mythologemes as “statements that are the basis of our culture world-view” (Masterov 1995: 31). In Kordonskij’s view, mythologeme can be defined as “interpretation of social reality based on proof persistent models of images” (Kordonskij 2006: 121). He assumes further that “mythologeme mostly explicates why existing objects do exist and why they function in this way and not otherwise” (2006: 121). Saulenko assumes that “mythologeme is a persistent structural unit of myth, maintaining integrity and sense in different contexts” (Saulenko 2001: 8). Hollis alleges that mythologeme is a “mythological idea or motif. [...] Several of them do construct myth” giving examples of anabasis, katabasis, hero, and adventure (Hollis 2010[2004]: 10, 16). Khazov conceives mythologemes as consistent cultural patterns (Khazov 2009: 9). Chernyshkov defines mythologeme as an “integral element of myth subordinated to its general regularities and fixing rules of describing existing order of things in public consciousness” (Chernyshkov 2012: 20). Ryzhova identifies mythologeme with concept and mythological word (in Barthes’s strategy), and ideologeme with Bakhtin’s sense of the concept (Ryzhova 2014: 28). It is fairly easy to notice that the amplitude of variety in definitions and comprehension of the mythologeme is relatively large.

Although some of the definitions are arguable from the methodological point of view, I made an attempt to figure out common strategic tools used by the authors in defining this concept. Hence, as we can see, the common keywords in describing mythologeme are systematization, basis, model, integrity, structural unit, general idea, motif, image, sense, world-view, and consciousness.

In elaborating the strategy of Lévi-Strauss, Liszka speaks about *the mythemic sequence* and defines it as the “basic unit of action in the myth” (Liszka 1989: 117), which gives us an insight about the inner dynamic of the mytheme. However, not all authors use the term mytheme in its initial meaning. For example, an intrinsic confusion occurs with the prominent work of Merab Mamardashvili and Alexander Piatigorsky, “Symbol and consciousness. Meta-physical reasonings about mind, symbol, and language”, where the concept mytheme is applied (Mamardashvili, Piatigorsky 1997: 56). The authors define this term as the acts, objects, and world events “penetrating to any epochs, any human structures” and containing something timeless and something as an identity. Mind appears to be a “universal observer” in relation to these type of acts, objects, and events (1997: 55–56). Mamardashvili and Piatigorsky argue further that “regardless of the real connection, two events should exist in different cultures or personalities that constitute an integral world object” (1997: 57). Returning to the discussion about the emic vs. etic nature of mytheme as a structural unit in Lévi-Strauss’ thought, we notice that in the perspective of Mamardashvili and Piatigorsky (unlike Lévi-Strauss) mytheme appears as an emic category. In this way, the researchers put forward a new perspective towards understanding mytheme not as a contextual unit but a universal one. At the same time, it would appear, the strategy of these authors differs from that of Lévi-Strauss, because they examine myth mostly as a mode of reasoning or

experiencing in the tradition of the Tartu–Moscow semiotic school. Still, this inclination gives an important insight for the further elaboration of this concept, including another angle for myth’s treatment. Despite the fact that “Symbol and mind” was published quite a long time ago, it is difficult to identify to what extent it has actually influenced further definitions of mythologeme vs. mytheme.

I have found out that there are several researchers who also apply mytheme, not in Lévi-Strauss’s sense, but rather in a Jungian sense, or at least that seems to be the case according to their references. For instance, Sergeeva writes, “mythemes provide representation of objects which do not exist in nature, as a result, lexemes articulating the imaginations do not have referents, although tangible images representing allegedly the real signs are present” (Sergeeva 2007: 96)<sup>27</sup>. To put it in another way, she states that mythemes are a result of the mythological understanding of reality and calls them concepts-mythemes in her work. Also, we can find very similar definitions of mytheme in the works of Podol’skaja and Valeeva, who use the notion of mytheme in linguistics as names of some fictional objects of archaic myths and fairy-tales, proper names of deities in the pantheon (theonymes) (Podol’skaja 1978; Valeeva 2011). It is worth noticing that Valeeva distinguishes mythologeme as a conceptual core of myth and mytheme as a linguistic unit of myth (Valeeva 2011: 20). To sum up, the analysis of literature demonstrates that the concept of mythologeme is more frequently used than the concept of mytheme in philosophical, anthropological, and linguistic studies. Often researchers do not make rigorous distinctions between mythologemes and mythemes and therefore both concepts remain fluctuant.

To sum up briefly, (1) mytheme was not strictly conceived in the sense Lévi-Strauss uses it in his analysis, or so it appears from the available sources. Nevertheless, it was reconsidered as a concept and a new perspective towards its treatment emerged eventually. Meanwhile, mythologeme retained the sense of its initial definition, which has been since elaborated and complemented. (2) Mythemes are dynamic and abstract structural units. At any rate, one can find them in some relation to binary oppositions (this term refers to myth, as a mode of consciousness, mode of thinking, procedure of thinking). In turn, mythologemes reflect certain universal models of mythological perception. They are also universal but more precisely articulated (the term refers mostly to mythology as text). Apparently, one can find mythologemes by means of comparison of different mythological texts and by separating common structural units from them. (3) Since mythemes are revealed in time, dynamics and relativity, and I believe that mythemes correlate foremost with *time in mythological chronotope*. Mythologemes, in contrast, are more independent from time and more related to context, giving us insight about their correlation with space (*topos*) in mythological *chronotope*. I summarized the main features, keywords and similarities of mytheme and mythologeme in the following table (Table 3).

---

<sup>27</sup> Sergeeva, Elena 2007. Evolyutsiya kontsepta-mifemy v russkom jazykovom soznanii. Russkii jazyk: istoricheskie sud’by i sovremennost. Proceedings of the 3rd International Congress of Researchers in Russian Philology. Moscow.

**Table 3.** Summarizing and comparative table of the main differences between mytheme and mythologeme as it results from the literature review.

	<b>Mytheme</b>	<b>Mythologeme</b>
1	mythological structural unit; it can be found emerging from some relation between binary oppositions; possess hybrid nature/could be universal	structural unit of myth, reflects some universal models how mythological mind explains complicated abstract ideas; it possesses universality
2	apparently, refers to both <i>mythology</i> as text and <i>myth</i> , as a mode of conscious, mode of thinking, procedure of thinking	apparently, refers to <i>mythology as text</i> , narrative
3	mythemes can be more obviously found in myth as speech and language	can be found in the mode of myth/mythology as language
4	mythemes correlate with time category, are revealed in dynamics, functions and relativity	mythologemes need context, still they are independent
5	in linguistic framework it can be compared to phoneme including all its variants	by analogy it can be compared to lexeme, ideologeme
6	<b>Keywords</b>	
	<b>Mytheme</b>	<b>Mythologeme</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>bundle of relations, harmony in music, cartomancy</i></li> <li>– minimal constituent of the narrative</li> <li>– mediation between known and unknown reality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– archetype, unit of image and sense, general place or idea, primary systematization of the real vital material, basis of our culture</li> <li>– world-view, persistent model of images, structural unit of myth</li> <li>– maintaining integrity and sense in different contexts, mythological idea or motif, integral element, concept</li> </ul>

### 1.3 Application

As the literature overview suggests, distinguishing between the both concepts is reasonable. Mytheme and mythologeme were introduced and defined, both originally and later, as models of different entities and as different structural units. However, the analysis of the case studies demonstrates that there is a widespread tendency of applying mythologeme and mytheme in the same generic and vague sense (as equally widespread [false] idea that is typical for some discourse). This tendency is predominantly typical for literature studies, social and political sciences, anthropology, and culture studies. I will briefly demonstrate just a few examples from the papers of Polysaev, Mischenko, Saveljeva, Saulenko, León, and others, where these concepts are mentioned. However, it would be then perhaps be even more interesting to begin with the classical examples of Jung and Kerényi and Lévi-Strauss.

In the very same work where the definition of mythologeme appears for the first time, Jung and Kerényi propose examples of mythologemes *Orphan Infant* (Jung and Kerényi 1996[1941]: 41), *Divine Child* (ibid., 44, 69), *Great Heroic Act* (ibid., 66), *New World Order*, or *New World* (ibid.: 74) and *Wedding of Goddess Who Is Resisting* (ibid., 142).

As for Lévi-Strauss, the researcher demonstrates the following examples of mythemes in his most famous mythological studies (*Mythologies*): *Character With His Severed Leg* connoting *With Moon Spots* (Lévi-Strauss 2007[1971]: 213), mytheme of *Two Blind Women Who Are Antagonists* (ibid., 383), mytheme *Narrow But Suitable For Swimming Channel Traversing Through Drawback Of A Cliff or A Bog* (ibid., 383).

Even judging only by these few examples, it is evident that the researchers provide quite consistent examples corresponding to their particular definitions of the concepts. Proceeding from the abovementioned examples, it is worth stressing once more that mythologemes appear as paradigmatic invariants, whereas mythemes seem to be syntagmatic invariants. It goes without saying that it would be interesting to compare the initial examples with the application of mythologeme/mytheme concepts in further case studies.

Among more recent researches, there is an example of *mythologeme* given by I. Saveljeva in her “Where Is More Democracy, There Is More Socialism” (Saveljeva 2000:66–67). The author just presents this *mythologeme* without theoretically discussing the concept itself. Another similar instance we can find from Saulenko’s book, where the author illustrates *mytheme* “Grave of Lenin Is A Cradle Of Humanity” (Saulenko 2001:103), although the title of her book contains, at the same time, the other term – *mythologeme*<sup>28</sup>. Moreover, the author provides us even a definition of the mythologeme, which demonstrates, that Saulenko applies both concepts in totally same sense<sup>29</sup>. In our opinion, the both examples given here could be defined neither as mytheme nor as

---

<sup>28</sup> *Mythologemes of Totalitarian Art* (2001)

<sup>29</sup> See previous section.

mythologeme since they represent not myth but ideological discourse. The latter is pursuing the objective of adjusting social discrepancies, meanwhile myths want to eliminate discrepancies between human being and nature (Larrain 1980: 145, 150). So in this sense the second example represents rather an ideologeme<sup>30</sup> typical for the context of the Soviet mass culture, and the first one just represents a widespread idea or in some context another ideologeme within contemporary political discourse.

Following that, Léon gives an example of the *Lost Arcadia* as the most common *mytheme* represented in connotations of nature (in the Spanish field) in advertising (Léon 2001:68). Yet another sample we can find from Polysaev's paper, where he speaks about "From Zero To Hero" *mythologeme* (Polysaev 2008:130). I, however, would rather perceive these examples in totally opposite manner. For example, in the first case the author points out certain common sense carrying universality. It seems to me then that "lost Arcadia (or Paradise)", representing some universal space as *eutopia*, should be treated rather as a *mythologeme*: that is, a brilliant incarnation of a consistent and widespread idea fixated with space coordinate in mythological chronotope. Having said that, the second example from the Lévi-Straussian perspective would correspond even much better to the *mytheme* definition as it reveals itself in time and exhibits time. As we will intend to prove further, this case is specifically more about mytheme of Ttransformation, in so far as it does not represent any general place, but some dynamic model containing two binary oppositions.

Also, Grigorjeva, for instance, mentions mythologeme of the "kiss resulting in death or a kiss which takes the last breath away". She explains her exemplification in following way: "A mythologeme mediated by the idea that the soul-word leaves the body or flesh-space via mouth, binding this plotline with the process of speech-genesis applied to the Word of God" (Grigorjeva 2007: 187).

T.Saveljeva, too, analyzes an example of the mythologeme of *catastrophe* actualized by mythological apprehension of mass fears (T.Saveljeva 2013). These last two instances seem to match the idea of mythologeme as it was discussed and summarized above.

There are many cases, where researchers of myth studies refer to Jung's definition by giving name to such mythologemes as First man, World tree, Flood (death of humanity and salvation of the Favourites) and many others. For instance, Goran in his monograph, *Ancient Greek Mythologeme of Fate* (Goran 1990), demonstrates his understanding of the mythologeme concept in the same fashion as well. No doubt, it would be interesting to compare it with Toporov's analysis of image of World Tree (in mythology among other fields). While he did not call it mythologeme directly, the fact remains that it is precisely the very same structural unit.

These several cases demonstrate that researchers have not commonly distinguished between the two concepts. That, no doubt, adds to occasional ambiguity or even causes outright confusion as, perhaps, in Saulenko's example. In

---

<sup>30</sup> If we accept Larrain's distinction between ideology and mythology.

contrast, I would rather like to argue that it is indeed worthwhile to separate mytheme and mythogeme as self-contained structural units of myth. This strategy, from our point of view, would give additional benefits for studying myth specifically from semiotic perspective. While for us it may mean, first and foremost, mass culture myth, we do not, by all means, suggest that it could not be equally valuable and efficient for analyzing other modes of myth. This much seems pretty clear: an analysis of mass culture myth requires a certain consistent system of tools.

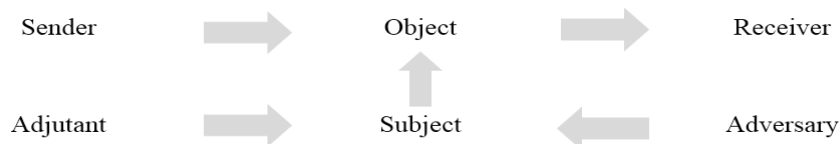
#### **1.4 Redefinition and epistemological limitation**

I offer the following specifications and redefinitions mainly stemming from the initial definitions of both concepts, but having also taken into consideration and generalizing their applications by different researchers up to the present (Zaporozhtseva 2016).

(1) I conceive mythogeme as a universal structural unit of myth that is an invariant folded into symbolic kernel, which reflects the most widespread existential human meanings about world discovering by mythological mind: ever so often it discovers a socio-cultural model. A substantial peculiarity of the mythogeme is constituted by its relation to spatial coordinate within mythological chronotope and linked to paradigmatic dimension of language, which constructs its apparent stability (Zaporozhtseva 2016: 38). Mythogeme appeals to a peculiar mode of time (eternity, where time can flow in any direction and be discrete), which is beyond empirical perception of time. Nevertheless, its entity combines projection of shared timeless images of community (motherland, foreigners), basic social roles maintaining community (king, hero) and models of existential discourse (fate). Taking into account certain case studies, I would like to denote such groups as cosmogonic, or origin mythologemes (World Tree, Flood, or End of the World, Golden Age), social-roles mythologemes (Hero, King), anthropogonic mythologemes (First Man), etiological mythologemes (creation of different things and phenomena), existential mythologemes (Fate, Death). All of these can be found in mass culture discourse in some specific variation or another. Culture codes in applied marketing semiotics remind mythologemes in contemporary mode, they differ only as they exist within mass culture discourse and are not universal (culture codes of “luxury”, “westernness”, “femininity”).

As soon as mythologemes emerge within a narrative, I insist that technically they may appear as actants within the narrative schema offered by A.J. Greimas (2004[1966]: 174–185 and 192–212) (Fig.4). Basing on Propp’s (1928) theory of stable and varying elements of narrative Greimas introduced the actantial model which represents more abstract and more universal structure of narrative comparing to Propp’s one. Greimasian model can be used as a device for analysis of any narrative regardless genre or even thematized actions such as real life events. Due to this model any narrative can be represented by six basic

components, called actants. They are connected between each other by the axis of desire (Subject and Object), the axis of power (Adjutant and Adversary), and the axis of transmission or knowledge (Sender and Receiver). So this device of analysis enables to classify all elements of action and to see major and secondary roles of them and their functions.



**Figure 4.** Actantial model of narrative by Greimas.

What is important, actants can be represented not only by character of the narrative or objects (such as magic sword, for example) but also with concepts. This crucial point enables heuristic algorithm of this model as a verificatory device. I assume that mythologemes appear as independent actants of mythological narrative. And their specific roles more often relate to the axis of power or desire, in other words mythologemes play roles of an Adjutant, an Adversary or an Object. Within narrative those actants transmit/take away power to/from a Subject (protagonist of mass culture narrative or even real person in real circumstances) and in this way influence on the process of acquiring an Object. So when it is possible to trace all abovementioned properties of a structural unit coupled with an independent actant role, it can be clear indicator of mythologeme within mass culture discourse.

(2) Based on the above mentioned, I assume that mytheme possess more complicated (hybrid) ontology than mythologeme. I regard mytheme to be foremost an invariant (emic structure) unfolding in myth narrative which can also be treated as an etic structure of myth in some cases. In other words, a recurring motifeme<sup>31</sup> that articulates its entity in dynamics and development (ibid., 38–39). Although I support and elaborate Lévi-Strauss's idea that every mytheme is necessary for realization of the purpose of myth, I still feel that Lévi-Straussian mytheme depends much more on context. That imposes certain limitations to mass culture discourse, since we deal with the fragmentarity itself and therefore need consistent tools. A promising outlook for this mode of mytheme stems from Piatigorsky's and Mamardashvili's insights, although other researchers have applied mytheme in some invariant modes as well. I would like to apply this term with this specification in mind. Accordingly, I suggest we ought to think of it as a hybrid structural unit of myth while actively

<sup>31</sup> In Nöth's definition: entities of an abstract. Deep level of analysis, thus corresponding to Vladimir Propp's functions (Nöth 1995: 371)

seeking possibilities to universalize it in order to capture myth in mosaic mass cultural context.

For this purpose, I would return to Kyrylyuk's conception of vital, mortal, and immortal *Weltanschauung Categories of Ultimate Bases* (WCUB) as a supportive theoretical tool (Kyrylyuk 2008). These three WCUB can constitute several amount of discrete sequences. For example, an idea of a miracle in culture can be structurally presented by consequential overcoming of the three categories as it is mentioned in the Figure 3. From a cultural-anthropologic perspective, the main idea of a miracle involves a scheme of "painless" overcoming of *death* as cultural category (namely, acquiring some good or wealth without an input of one's own energy). I argue that in semiotics outlook this pattern could be called the universal *mytheme of Transformation* as it possesses all the aforementioned peculiarities mentioned by Lévi-Strauss while, at the same time, preserves characteristics of an emic structural unit of myth. The mytheme can be spotted throughout a large variety of mass culture texts: movies, commercials, songs<sup>32</sup> and could also be discovered in the narratives about initiation, or in those of turning a humiliated hero into a king. Such mytheme includes a gradual overcoming of certain stages in the dynamics. The proposed procedure would be fruitful for the exploring of certain myth deployments in mass culture narratives, where different mythemes can be found. Precisely this universal mytheme can be found in the motifeme *goodness gains the victory over evil*, or in the Polysaev's proposed example, *From Zero To Hero*.

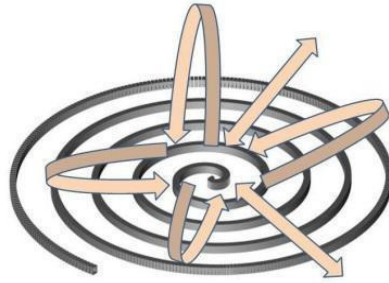
I outline the initial sequence as it was presented by Kyrylyuk (Vital – Mortal – Immortal) and its derivative variant (Vital – Mortal – backtracking to Vital). The first sequence, I would call the mytheme of Transformation, and the second reduced one – the mytheme of Backtracking. I will present examples of them in the next subsection together with several mythologemes that derive from the archaic mythological narratives but also prove to be effective in analysing mass culture.

*Functions.* I assume that structural units of myth have definite functions. They are the most "structured structures", or forms, situated in the core of culture (alongside with natural languages and meta descriptions of culture). Without a doubt, they tend from the center to periphery, penetrating culture, but gravitating constantly towards the center (Fig.5). According to Barthes, "Under the effect of mythical inversion, quite contingent foundations of the utterance become such core structures as Common Sense, Right Reason, the Norm, General Opinion: in short, the doxa (which is the secular figure of the Origin)" (1977[1957]: 165).

---

<sup>32</sup> I would add that such narratives propose namely adjutants (from Greimasian actant model) for overcoming *death* that make them commercially successful.





**Figure 5.** Circulation of structural units of myth within semiosphere.

To put it in J.Lotman terms, this mechanism could also be regarded as a translation. Rephrasing Larrain's ideas (1980: 145, 150) a text might get from periphery to center of culture by being translated by mythological mechanism of translation: by the mechanism of overturning peripheral texts into typical ones. Unlike with other messages, the aim of myth is related to existential dimensions of human beings: life and death, which means that mythological redundancy is in relation to existential appeal. In this regard, the mythological mechanism of translation is focused on translational unpredictability of mysterious topos out of culture into cultural categories, or, by the same logic, within culture to provide translation from foreign cultural language into one's own. Thus, mass culture structural units are certain mechanisms for reducing the existential unpredictability<sup>33</sup>.

Mythological texts are autocommunicative texts, so discrete structural units of myth appear as the mechanism of adherence between the external and internal space of culture as semiosphere, space beyond culture as non-semiosphere, and personal semiosphere of an individual. Clearly, in order to provide stability, this type of translation accomplished by existential universal is required. The constant human fears of main mysteries can be ultimately reduced to life and death categories (Kyrylyuk 2008).

To put it in other words, mythological mechanism of contemporary culture most definitely plays the role of an existential border that provides stabilization for individuals. Ivanov argues (1998[1978]: 406) that any cybernetic system (incl. organism or society) solves problems within certain environments, where discrepancy of the system, and that of the environment, involves necessarily finding some sub-system, which would be responsible for orientating in this precise environment or finding solutions of precise problems. All complex living organisms, including human beings and human communities, feel biological lack of time because of time constraints of their existence. That leads

---

<sup>33</sup> In terms of cybernetics, as long as redundancy is necessary in order to overcome entropy and make a message intelligible (O'Sullivan et al. 1994: 106, 259), it can be said that mythological mechanism of mass cultural text acquires redundancy (the level of predictability) while reducing entropy (unpredictability of the form or content of the message).

to a necessity to make a decision from two possibilities in circumstances of high degree of latitude. It is possible, therefore, to make any decision at random. Ivanov assumes that the fortunetelling in Ancient Rome, in this regard, was an appropriate device.

Finally, I would like to add a note on epistemological limitation. I tend to think that structural-semiotic insight may clarify complicated processes of semiosis, which surely exists beyond structural schemes; at the same time, it is known that structural approach is not a universal paradigm. As J.Lotman has noted: “Completely stable invariant structures do not exist at all, generally speaking. If we allow such a hypothesis, then it is also necessary to recognise, albeit theoretically, the limits of their possible combinations” (Lotman 2000a [1992]: 101)<sup>34</sup>. It is impossible to analyze culture only via structural framework; such approach has been challenged since the middle of the 20th century (Oswald 2015). I suppose that structural approach is not sufficient to trace dialectics of myth as the only tool, so the collaboration between structural semiotic and post-structural semiotic insights should be set in order to grasp mass culture mythology. Structural units of myth may become a contribution from structural semiotics for finding some invariant structures, but which should be in any case regarded within mass culture discourse through reference and subjectivity, which are revealed in performance.

### **1.5 De-commoditization as articulation of mythological mechanism**

Semiotic approach presumes communication to be the most important as the meaning-making process and where attention directed towards text, and the way of its reading, reveals the mechanism generating meaning (Bortun, Purcarea 2013: 104). This process of interaction of consumers with objects as generation of meaning is known as “de-commoditization” (Sassatelli 2007). “De-commoditization” is a process of deprivation of economic value of commodities by means of endowing them with unique personal values during the process of appropriation. This notion explicates how consumers convert universal economic value into unique subjective value while choosing commodities. In other words, consumers make objects of mass culture meaningful for themselves; they translate them into their own language. It is closely related to mythological mindset, which involves autocommunicative mechanism, i.e. opening up an inner dialogue by a recipient apropos his or her existential values.

De-commoditization becomes possible due to the diversity of mass culture form (spatial and temporal contexts) and its content. For example, “wrapped culture” or “borrowed landscape” (Grinshpun 2014: 350) techniques exploit the

---

<sup>34</sup> This quotation is given in translation of Wilma Clark (Lotman, Juri 2009[1992]. Culture and explosion. Translated by Wilma Clark, ed. by Marina Grishakova. Berlin, NY: Mouton de Gruyter., p.114.).

ambience of a venue or specific design as an allusion to another space and time. “Borrowed landscape” is a traditional gardening technique for creating an illusion that “garden extends beyond its physical borders” (ibid., 350–351). “Wrapped culture” is a reconstruction of exotic spatial-temporal design of Other culture. Grinshpun, for example, considers Starbucks in Japan as an example of “wrapped” Western culture and Starbucks coffee-houses in Japan as “borrowed landscape” phenomenon.

Consumption often consists in reframing the meaning and uses of material culture by translating the purely commercial value of goods into other forms of value: affection, relationships, symbolism, status, normality, etc. Contemporary consumer practices can be seen as practices of de-commoditization: diverse and varied. (Sassatelli 2007: 139)

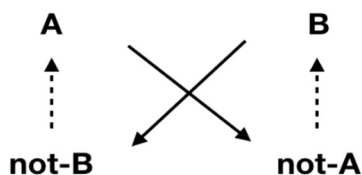
The mechanism of de-commoditization process (both of the form and content) can be regarded through the mapping of consumers “valorization” which is a semiotic equivalent to the notion of “de-commoditization”. Valorization is a particularly important aspect of mythological narrative, as “myth is present in every understanding of the world as endowed with values” (Kolakowsky 1989[1972]: 29). The process of valorization (making valuable) can be seen also through actantial model of Greimas. The valorization reveals through the axis of desire between Subject and Object. Subject can be a central Hero of a narrative (the protagonist of advertising spot, the protagonist of a movie, TV-series or other mass cultural text) or even consumer herself when she constructs own narrative containing self-representation. Object always represents a sought benefit and desired existential value, which is a cornerstone for the valorization process. Thus, mythologemes as Adjutants or Adversaries are important elements of mythological world as they can assist or interfere Subject during her way to a desired Object.

It should be noted that for mythological mind it is peculiar to deal with a special type of valorisation that can be regarded by Floch’s semiotic square.

Semiotic square of consumers’ valorization is valuable semiotic technique introduced by Floch (2001[1990]). He elaborated Greimas square further for structurization of consumers’ experiences for commercial purposes and established that it can be successfully applied for mass culture analysis.

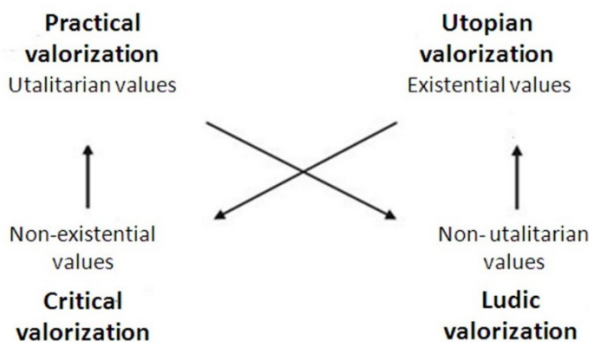
Semiotic square of Greimas (2004[1966]) is derived from Aristotle’s logical square of oppositions and is considered to be the elementary structure of meaning. It is often used to analyze relationships between signs (level of expression) through the opposition of the concepts (level of meaning). The square demonstrates three type of relationships between signs: opposition, contradiction, and complementarity (Fig. 6). The square is formed by initial binary relationship of opposition between two terms [A] and [B], where [A] is the assertion and [B] is the negation. There are two other terms [not-A] and [not-B] which stay in contradiction to [A] and to [B] respectively. The complementarity relationships is revealed between [A] and [not-B], [B] and

[not-A] terms. By deep analysis of hidden relationships between meanings of signs, this tool helps to understand inner logic of any topic, text, discourse etc. and can become a heuristic device. I demonstrate application of this tool by example of opposition Rational vs. Emotional in Chapter III, Subchapter 2.2.2.



**Figure 6.** Greimas semiotic square (2004[1966]).

In turn, Floch’s analysis is based on separating two fundamental types of consumers’ valorization: the first is a strategy of discontinuity, and the second is one reflecting continuity. Discontinuous valorization determines consumer choice, motivated by utilitarian, or instrumental values, namely when an appropriated object is just a means for achieving a basic goal (e.g. to use taxi service to get to work in time). Continual valorization is determined by existential motivation, when an object is related to some idealistic purposes (justice, love, family enhancement, serving to people, or following own destiny). Having elaborated those strategies onto semiotic square, he proceeded with four types of consumers’ valorization (Fig. 7). Practical vs. Utopian types of valorization reflect semantic axis of discontinuity vs. continuity within consumers’ discourse. Additional positions of contradiction add complementary types of Critical vs. Ludic valorization respectively.



**Figure 7.** J.-M.Floch Four types of consumers’ valorization (2001[1990]: 147).

According to the Floch model, which was elaborated also in many other works (Semprini 1992, Ventura 2015, Salvador 2011 and other), mass culture mythology as a complex phenomenon is situated on the territory of existential values (especially utopian valorization) connecting mass culture texts with deep existential values of audience, attaching them to their lifestyle (as the main purpose of brands). Utopian valorization is related to the world of fantasy and involves intuitive-continual perception for determining mass culture mythology territory and providing it with ways for de-commodification process (additional to emotional engagement or critical reasons).

Utopian values as a term means not something “illusory” but suggests a “final aim”. “In narrative semiotics,” Floch explains it, “a ‘utopian’ or ‘utopic space’ is the space in which hero achieves victory, the space where performances are accomplished and where the subject is united with his or her own base values” (1990: 211–212). So mythologemes and mythemes are articulated markers of the discursive level of mass culture. As such, they could be seen as certain formation which reveals values of deeper semionarrative level. The linkage between deep values of audience/recepients and mythologemes and mythemes revealing them in mass culture textual forms specifies both periphery-center gravity of mass culture as semiosphere and ontological ground of mass culture mythology.

People immerse into mass culture in order to gain new emotional experience connected to achieving non-utalitarian goals. For example, buying gifts for Christmas stems from intention to enhance friendship or family intimacy and the tradition of proposing with a diamond ring demonstrates a sacrifice for the sake of love as there are no economical or other basic utalitarian values behind this “mass culture tradition” (Epstein 1982).

Naturally, the entire whole of mass culture discourse reveals different territories of valorization: one text can represent different territories through different markers and have several different meanings. However, when it comes to mainly practical or critical type of valorization, we would consider those texts predominantly via practices of consumption and marketing communication. In contrast, the territory of existential values discovers a broad horizon of philosophical-anthropological and cultural interpretation. In some cases texts appeal to existential values par excellence. I will return to these types of texts during my analysis of mythologemes and mythemes in the next subchapter.

In 2012 a well-known Spanish watches brand, “Lotus”, dedicated a special collection to the global cultural hot topic at the time: the end of the world, which was evoked by the expiring of Maya calendar. The advertising campaign’s motto read: “Enjoy every second [2012 is coming]” (Fig. 8). The concept of the last day has mythological origin (mythologeme of Flood, subchapter 2.4) and appeals to existential values: in ludic manner, through the denotation of Maya prediction, the brand communication appeals to the universal fear of death and to the fluidity of life aimed at triggering the attention of an individual. Moreover, it offers existential value of *life* as “taking action” in metaphoric sense. If we apply the model of consumers’ discourse

valorization for the analysis of this particular case, this message reveals neither utilitarian values (it says nothing about instrumental application of the watches “Lotus”), nor critical values (there is no information about reasons to convince a consumer to buy it: nothing about the quality, rich functionality or affordability of the watches of this brand). The message represents ludic-aesthetic territory of valorization (it calls for “enjoying” as type of experiencing) and utopian territory of valorization, which, to me, is the most important in this case given my inquiry of mass culture mythology. The utterance, “2012 is coming”, alludes to mythologemes of Death which in cultural discourse represents a lack of some source: life, money, time, energy, etc. Another way to read it could be: “Enjoy every second *while you have money, health, time, possibilities*“, or “*Take an action instead of waiting*”. In the latter case it can be regarded as being connected to the mythologeme of Course (Subchapter 2.2) and mythologeme of Flood (Subchapter 2.4).



**Figure 8.** Lotus watches collection of 2012 ads.

It goes without saying that the mythological dimension of ads communication is more articulated in commercial communication of the beauty industry (anti-aging, beauty), medical field (pain, fear), nutrition and health (sports, quality of life), significant life events (love, family), to name only a few topics of existential relevance. In contrast, advertising of practical commodities like a bookshelf, for example, does not usually deal with engaging the mythological mindset, and involves and appeals to mostly utilitarian or practical values of consumers. However, this cannot be said for more expensive fields like automotive, where mythological narratives are used for successful convincing communication. All other forms of mass culture, i.e. cinema, songs, multimedia texts and services also contain mythological components involving existential valorization during consumers’ interaction with mass culture objects.

## 1.6 Findings

Thus, structural units of mass culture are intelligible triggers of indirect articulation of existential values translated through mass culture texts. It is possible to say that mythologemes and mythemes, as elementary structures of mass culture mythology, become vehicles of de-commodification process. In this way, they provide a linkage between audience and mass culture text by amplifying its hidden meanings from one side, and surface (discursive) level and deeper (semionarrative) level of mass culture texts, from another side. In the next subchapter, I aim to demonstrate as to what particular mythologemes and mythemes can occur during the analysis of this process.

## 2. THE ANATOMY OF STRUCTURAL UNITS OF MASS CULTURE MYTHOLOGY

In my research, I have chosen the most commonly discussed mythologemes and examined them by applying them to mass culture texts. However, I do admit that the list of the presented mythologemes is by no means exhaustive. In order to describe how structural units interact in texts, I analyse them by way of figurative notion of anatomy by focusing on dynamics of context in which they occur. Once they appear within narrative, I inquire their narrative function via Greimasian actantial model. Proceeding from the definitions of mythologeme and mytheme, I then generalize several of them in this subchapter with a view to show the mechanism of mass culture mythology in dynamics. The analysis of every mythologeme and mytheme is preceded by related topics reflecting the circle of meanings in mass culture semiosphere for each one.

### 2.1 Mythologeme of Fate

Related topics: *life and death, individual's life, freedom vs. necessity, determination as unfreedom, luck, fortuna, following one's own fate.*

Related existential values: *to obtain justice, to fulfil a mission in life.*

The analysis of many mass culture texts has demonstrated that justice/injustice opposition is one of the most important semes penetrating mass culture discourse which hides itself behind existential valorization and hence its mythological aspect. Justice or injustice often acquires a strong meaning of an independent, integral actant (Adjutant or Adversary) capable of influencing the main character – Subject when he is gaining an Object (according to actant schema of Greimas). As I mentioned before when an abstract idea acquires independent meaning in real life, it can be an evident marker that we deal with a mythologeme within mass culture narrative. In this case it comes about the

mythologeme of Fate. Being related to justice/injustice same axis, the mythologeme of Fate is one of the strongest structural units to illustrate my argument.

It is clear that the mythologeme of Fate is derived from an existential human attempt to convert chaos into cosmos and from delegating responsibility in circumstances of unpredictability and time limit in secular societies. It is connected to an existential of hope as a negotiation of fear towards unpredictable future. It is present throughout mass culture discourse, e.g. in many Hollywood production movies, in narratives about and around celebrities, in brands' narratives, in horoscopes, in mass media discourse about catastrophes, etc. In mass culture discourse it appears as a mysterious Helper (Adjutant) or Opponent (Adversary) interfering with everyday life. Still, mythologeme of Fate as a universal of culture has been appearing in a vast number of cultural texts ever since Ancient Times.

Back in the Ancient Times, the interpretation of the mythologeme of Fate was "causality, necessity, inevitability, unavoidable, etc. of everything that is happening or should happen" (Goran 1990: 187). There were no explicable grounds or rational inner principle present in Fate's "decisions". Personification of fate would acquire several different forms in Ancient Greek mythology and other traditions. Moirae, Isis, the Norns, Makosh and other goddesses personified Fate in a plethora of Ancient myths. Ivanov insists that it was one of the "abstract concepts" that was common in Latin, Iran and Slavic mythological systems alike. Fortuna, Sud, Sudba, Dolia, in particular are the type of concepts where those goddesses are notably female (Ivanov 2009[1969]: 223). For example, Makosh in Slavic tradition was a spinner<sup>35</sup> and Dolia was a kind goddess, an assistant of Makosh; she was spinning lucky fate. Nedolia (Nuzha, Nuzhda), in contrast, was a goddess, and also an assistant of Makosh, but spinning unlucky fate. Within mythological mindset Dolia and Nedolia are not personifications of abstract notions without objective existence, on the contrary, they are alive personalities who are identical to virgins of fate (Vagurina 1998: 29, 40, 44–45). Moreover, and not so surprisingly, the ritual itself was treated as a way; indeed, the ritual texts are often saturated with "way" and "bridge" lexemes (Ivanov 2009[1969]: 222). In the Middle Ages of Hebrew-Christian Europe and Islamic Middle-East, the same idea was substituted with the religious concept of disposition of Providence. Goran concedes that all these personifications encapsulate "mythologeme of Fate" (1990), which clearly demonstrates that despite the diversity of forms its essential core remains consistent and resistable.

---

<sup>35</sup> Thread or spindle is a necessary attribute of this topic, as it becomes increasingly about thread of life.



In a general philosophical sense, it could be said that “fate is a concept-mythologeme<sup>36</sup> conveying idea of determination as unfreedom” (Averintsev 1970: 159). While deliberating on events of one’s own life, an individual at certain point comes up with an idea of non-randomness of events and searches for the purpose of life; herewith the mythologeme of Fate appears as an “invariant and general meaning verifying foremost the existence of determining forces and dependence of human being’s life journey on them” (Postovalova 1994: 209). Mythological mindset perceives events following one another as in which the latter has been determined by the former, which is a specific mythological perception of reason-consequential linkage. This idea occurs not only in relation to past events but usually is also extrapolated to future, as human beings attempt to endow meaning to everything around them (e.g. astrological predictions). An individual finds himself determined by certain vague transcendental forces, and thus perceives events via freedom/necessity opposition. *Fate* defines life-awareness juxtaposed to the challenges of determinism and randomness, (un)/predictability, choice, chaos and cosmos, negotiation, dynamics of life, and the progression of the situations (ibid., 208). That is also connected to biological cycle, individual existential perception of time and cultural dimensions of life such as construction of someone’s identity, settling in life and building the communication with environment.

Mythologeme of Fate is an idea to zoom out the responsibility, when instead of taking ownership for some failures or mistakes, an individual refers to a common idea of external determination of life. Thus, granting mass culture discourse involves existential-emotional valorization, which opposes to rational awareness. The mythologeme of Fate in mass culture is a marker of meta-narrative about *life as determined direction and unavoidability of several situations as soon as everything is connected; at the same time this route leads to a total justice, that is why everyone should follow one’s own path and fulfil one’s own mission along this route.*

In addition to the existential aspect, mythologeme of Fate used to be treated as a part of legal reality. According to Bachinin, a famous Russian philosopher of law, the mythologeme of Fate was treated as a will of upper transcendental forces determining feats and crimes of people (Bachinin et al. 2003: 101) that is an Adversary in accordance to actant schema. Ancient Greek tragedies demonstrate frequent fracture of humans’ and gods’ rules invoking strict judgement upon themselves. That is a fate of Oedipus<sup>37</sup>, who became a murderer of his father and incestuous with his mother. Fate allows to talk not only about the guilt of the criminal but also about his trouble; something that is out of his order and that has pushed him to the gulf.

---

<sup>36</sup> I apply definition “mythologeme of Fate” instead of the “concept of fate” (as it was applied by several researchers) in order to emphasize its capacity to be a transmitter of mythological texts’ thinking.

<sup>37</sup> Sophocles, “Oedipus Rex”.

Mythologeme of Fate was also connected to the proto-myth of the original sin. The myth about the original sin deprived of sacrality was read as a myth about original crime and getting or receiving satisfaction for a misdeed. One of the examples is *Sud* in Slavic tradition (deity managing one's destiny) which is personified archaic pre-law tradition that reproduces the essential traits of the common Indo-European tradition (Ivanov and Toporov 1995). The term "ritus" in Latin means not merely a ritual but also a custom and especially a religious custom and it characterizes the processual side of the legal norm. Linguistic research finds the roots of "ritus" from the same Indo-European base that is in the Old German word "recht"; it comes about something right, appropriate, watertight (Gusejnov, Rashkovskij 2012: 615). In this respect, courts of justice as manifesting the idea of justice used to be identified with Fate.

Considering the process of judgment as reminiscence of archaic agon, Huizinga has pointed out that despite its symbolic component contemporary people cannot generally perceive law as something separated from an abstract justice. However, when it is complemented with a ludic component, it also involves sacral dimension and mythic reality (Huizinga 1994[1938]: 88). Evidently, as we have learned from Floch's semiotic square, it can be explained by involvement of emotional component of meaning-making process.

In Medieval times the justice of Heaven was made sense of via worldly justice. Eventually the concept of justice and judgement acquired existential meaning. Fate's idea as the Hand of God was determining everything that happened in life and it was also related to idea of miracle as a process of transformation (Averintsev 2006: 498–499). The idea of transformation as miracle also presumes that due to the judgement a possibility turns into reality and injury turns into justice. One of the most explicable peculiarities of mythologeme of Fate is an interpretation of the equivoque (Valeeva, Petrunina 2012: 16). Apparently, it can be compared to the evaluation of justice and injustice in mass culture events where the outcomes are not determined (international competitions, contests in cinema, sports, singing: e.g. The Oscars, Olympic games, The Eurovision Song Contest, etc.).

Thus, mythologeme of Fate in mass culture is a universal structural unit reflecting the most widespread human views about one's own as well as about collective life perception. It alludes to human fears before ungrasped and inexplicable phenomena, ultimately encompassing existential categories of life and death. Unlike its Ancient prototype, mass culture mythologeme of Fate is mostly about good luck. As long as mass cultural plots are plain, the initial unpredictability is being explicated in such a way that a hero receives a reward and a negative character receives a punishment, thereby an idea of justice is being revealed. Mythologeme of Fate functions as reassurance of audience especially in cases where the level of unpredictability is high.

Mythologeme of Fate helps mass culture objects to be successfully delivered and perceived by audience waiting for approval of its irrational anticipation. There are Hollywood movies ("Cinderella" plot, Silicon dreamland and the "happy-ending" narrative model, which is represented in linguistic formula

“everything is for good”). Also, there are brands’ narratives and advertisement, mascots for luck of sportsmen and sports teams<sup>38</sup>, as well as there are participants of other competitions (musicians, dancers and even politicians) and personal mascots in everyday life, such as, for example, a red string<sup>39</sup> worn on the left bracelet.<sup>40</sup> Those texts present a world-picture where everything is not a mere coincidence. It can be found in mass media discourse where three sets of emes of the prototypical semantic models of lingvo-mental sign *fate* can be found: 1) depends/does not depend on the will of a human being; 2) spontaneity/regularity; 3) interference/ non-interference of higher forces (Valeeva and Petrunina 2012: 15).

Consequently, mythologeme of Fate is a universal structural unit of myth that reflects the idea of unfreedom and determination of private or social life. Technically, it is revealed at connotative level of some mass cultural text by way of signs alluding to “fate/luck/misfortune”. This mythologeme helps to overturn the unpredictability of the present and future through explaining or naming future (luck, misfortune). It has helped to overcome cruxes of real perception of life or to bring some sacral “magic” power into it. The mythologeme of Fate reflects a passive attitude in mythological perception of life, in other words “to go with a flow”. In this respect, mythologeme of Fate represents standing point of delegation of responsibility to some abstract energies. Even the word *fate* being preserved in contemporary language shows stability of this mythologeme.

The mythologeme of Fate also foregrounds existential value of justice-aspiration and of acquiring goals in life which take the shape of an Adjutant or an Adversary among other actants. A great many mass culture narratives exploit this mythologeme in different forms, as an explanation for hardship of the main character of a narrative or “*What dreams may come*” (1998), “*Die hard*” (1998), *love dramas with cinderella plot*, horoscopes, fortune tellers, fortune cookies, mascots and similar. Naturally, the list of the described mythologemes and mythemes is not exhaustive. The main semiotic function of the mythologeme of Fate is predominantly the explanation (translation) of inexplicable injustice and overturning it into anticipation of an happy-end; into reassurance about intervention of some undiscovered transcendental mechanism in circumstances of secular society as a compensation of religious anticipation.

---

<sup>38</sup> The name of a German association football club contains Fortune word in “SC Fortuna Köln” itself.

<sup>39</sup> It has religious origin and it alludes to magic beliefs.

<sup>40</sup> This practice became a mass cultural practice after several celebrities in the 2000s demonstrated their bracelets (Madonna, Britney Spears).

## 2.2 Mythologeme of Course

Related keywords: *life and death, individual's life, future, tackle fate, choice, opportunity, writing one's future, life as a maze, shaping your destiny, taking action.*

Related existential values: *acquiring freedom, taking chance, soul searching.*

Another idea of life journey is represented by the mythologeme of Course. Unlike the mythologeme of Fate, the mythologeme of Course plays two actant roles of an Object and an Adjutant at the same time within a narrative. Its existential meaning usually reveals itself within plots about travelling; in journeys where the journey is a goal in itself.

Since the Ancient times, this idea has been also represented by a symbol of maze. Maze had existential-philosophical and sacral meaning and it signified a transformation of oneself during life journey due to hardship. One of the most famous ones in its materialization is the Minotaur maze. As a Ancient-Greek myth reads, it was Theseus who was brave enough to enter into the maze in order to kill Minotauros, the Cretan monstrosity. In order to find the return way from the maze, Theseus used a spindle with thread<sup>41</sup>. After he had killed Minotauros, he began to rewind the thread and found the way back by these means. However, once he got out of the maze he found that the spindle turned into a ball in his hands. It was a symbol of inner transformation of a hero who had come over a hardship.

The idea of a maze as a sacral symbol has been represented by a plethora of artifacts of human culture later on as well, e.g. the ancient petroglyphes depicting mazes along the way towards Santiago de Compostela and the whole of Galicia. Those intended to attract pilgrims and remind them that this way in a symbolic and spiritual sense is a maze. Moreover, there are similar petroglyphs in India, Ancient Egypt (Abydos), England (Tintagel Castle) and in medieval gothic cathedrals. It is, perhaps, worth mentioning that Chartres Cathedral, for example, has a maze drawings on the floor.

An Italian medieval folk tale, "Malevolent fate", tells a story of a girl Santina-Sfortuna. Everything touched by Santina-Sfortuna became damaged by the hands of her invisible evil lady Misfortune. However, everybody accused the girl as nobody knew the real cause of her trouble. Eventually Santina decides to go on a journey in order to find her lady Misfortune. The whole narrative presents itself as a way towards her future fortune. When other people had their protectresses – tidy ladies Fortunes, Santina's lady Misfortune was an unkempt and viraginous crone. The girl bathed her, gave her new dresses and presents, and the lady Misfortune then turned into a nice lady who changed the girl's life to the better. The main idea of this story is that Santina takes up an existential journey to change her misfortune to fortune in literal sense. This folktale distinctly shows oscillation between the two categories of determi-

---

<sup>41</sup> Thread of life.

nation and freedom of choice where the journey itself is a result and the process of freedom of choice.

The “New Year fairytale” advertising of a Moscovian bank in December 2016<sup>42</sup> demonstrates a similar plot where the journey is as means (Adjutant)<sup>43</sup> and a metaphor of change of the life-journey as a desired value (Object), which altogether constitute a mythologeme of Course.

The mythologeme of Course is a general mythological representation of the idea of life journey as a maze where a person can be lost. Continuing Florensky’s thinking about the issue of an active mind in construction of time, Ivanov aptly notices, “if to imagine the way through maze as an active tension of one’s mind we should admit that the only way to unthread the maze of life is to preserve clarity of mind and integrity of perception” (Ivanov 2007[1973]: 192–193). Hence, building one’s own destiny and life is possible due to the active mind constructing a continuous line of subjective time. At the same time, the passivity of awareness destroys this timeline; it breaks it down into separated, self-sufficient fragments that are united only by contiguity, but none of them can be deduced from the integral holistic time of the whole biography deploying inner diversity and rhythm of personality. “One’s life is being embraced only during minutes of soaring or praying, thus it appears as coherent integral whole” (ibid.).

It would appear, then, that the “thread” of time explains from rational perspective the perception of life. It is fully encapsulated in the mythologeme of Course as a conceptual symbol of this way, life journey depending on oneself’s intention, as it appears in mythological mind. The Nike’s slogan: “Just do it!”, which is a call for action as opposed to going with the flow, perfectly explicates this idea in another manner. Every mass culture call for transformation of one’s own life as an existential need refers to this mythologeme in fact.

Certain mass cultural patterns deriving from archaic traditional cultures such as celebration of Birthday, wedding and funerals reflect moment of discrete perception of life. Those moments are represented in mass culture as symbolic points of existential transformation, which reflects mythologeme of Course. The mythologeme of Course represents life as a discrete process constituted from existential points, stages, or curves of a maze. Those existential points in life are being experienced as situations of reevaluation (metaphorical transformation) of one’s own life. Representing mythological mind, the mythologeme of Course is revealed in texts as amplifying values of the meaning of life as a maze aimed at and towards transformation. The stories about great success, “from zero to hero” brand narratives (Coco Chanel life story, narratives about Lady D and others), mass culture calls to “following one’s own authentic way” (Nike’s “Don’t ask”, “Write the future”, “Just do it”, Louis Vuitton’s “The Spirit of

---

<sup>42</sup> Official Youtube channel of Moscow Credit Bank. Accessed 29.08.2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fp5CK95yD0U>

<sup>43</sup> There are two Adjutants in this narrative, another one is a mythologeme of Mother Nature, see subchapter 2.5.

Travel” campaign, Sprite’s “Obey your thirst”) discover the mythologeme of Course.

A project for Capsula Mundi<sup>44</sup> (egg-shaped coffins) is another illustration of a successful marketing niche of existential-mythological valorization for the Flower Children generation. The target audience for this idea is mainly the Baby boomers who are the first generation that accepted the consumer culture as a phenomenon and experienced the hippie culture first hand. The main motto of this project, “Life never stops”, calls for taking an action even after death (or literally to be responsible about the world), which is precisely opposite position to infamous “After us, the deluge”<sup>45</sup>. The designers of this project, Anna Citelli and Raoul Bretzel, propose to turn cemeteries into gardens, where everyone can choose a tree he or she wants to “become”. An existential value of this proposition that is “to take a chance to become immortal” played for success of this idea and became a cornerstone of the trend of eco-funerals. Ludic-aesthetic valorization of this idea to appear as eco-conscious person even about one’s own funeral in this case plays together with utopian valorization, where the mythologeme of Course as a “free choice” metaphor triggers another mythologeme – Immortality – which is the main utopian (final mythological aim) value of this proposition. There cannot be other reasons to follow this mass cultural trend albeit the existential (both ludic-aesthetic and mythological) ones play a crucial role.

This example also clearly illustrates the main function of the mythologeme of Course which is translation of unpredictability of future into a vision, overturning stressful chaos into mastered locus (space and time) and transforming an individual into a master of his/her own life. Capsula Mundi project offers for individuals to feel and experience predictability of their own “existence” after their biological death in secular realm, at least as far as the material-biologic aspect is concerned. That is why the main target audience of this project are those who want to control their own time-space of their own corps and want to serve for some further idealistic goal of preserving ecology of the Earth (utopic value), contribute towards the beauty of the Earth (utopic value), and to appear and to be perceived as eco-conscious persons (ludic value).

Many mass culture forms calling for a soul searching reflect the mythological perception encapsulated in the mythologeme of Course. There are many Eastern-philosophical practices such as yoga, vegan movement and mass culture texts (“Eat, Pray, Love” by Elizabeth Gilbert 2006, for example) among them. A less obvious phenomenon of “taking action” as soul searching and a type of experience in masses is known as “wrapped” culture (Grinshpun 2007: 353). When mass culture began to widespread as a global phenomenon, it allowed consumers to merge into the American culture where it had originated. However, by the present time, this mechanism has diversified in many senses.

---

<sup>44</sup> Official website of Capsula Mundi. Accessed 29.08.2019: <http://www.capsulamundi.it/en/>

<sup>45</sup> Famous expression attributed to Madame de Pompadour.

“Wrapped” or “packaged” culture literally alludes to the form of goods to take-away, but as a metaphor in philosophical-anthropological sense it means surplus experience (values) obtained by audience whenever mass culture forms (goods, services, texts) are appropriated. It metaphorically means “immersing” immediately into the Other culture or to touch a part of the Other semiosphere. “Wrapped” culture phenomenon creates a sort of immediate portal incorporated within native culture and translates it into some other time and space (formally) and values (by content). In this sense, *unpackaging* or *unwrapping* can have different connotations in mass culture such as „undressing“, „surprising“, where the strongest mythological connotation is „travelling“.

Anthropological research on contemporary consumer practices emphasizes this phenomenon of very specific and intensively marked (by ambience, peculiar visual or aural representation) practices; e.g. coffee culture, sushi culture and so on. Notably, when in Japan or China the Starbucks can become a representation or a text of “wrapped Western culture”, then Japanese sushi restaurants or Chinese restaurants, vice versa, became so popular in Western world as they represent exotic “wrapped Eastern culture”. Moreover, there are restaurants and hotels all over the world exploiting communistic retro-code with specific red-coloured design, Lenin’s busts or Che Guevara’s portraits. In many cases it creates ludic ambience; it is a sort of mass culture game. Nevertheless, sometimes it is related to the mythologeme of Course.

Grinshpun describes Starbucks case in Japan, where this coffee brand became a “window to another culture”, as incorporated within a native Japanese city (2014: 350). It drives consumers towards “wrapped” chronotope (space and time code) of contemporary Western (or to be more precise, contemporary American) culture. For example, such holidays as Christmas, Halloween or St.Valentine's day are not authentic for Japanese culture, but once one gets inside a Starbucks venue he or she experiences the odour of those holidays by the ambience and feels like they were sitting somewhere in Manhattan, for example. This feeling is further supported by the awareness that such “theme” park is alive (it changes from season to season, from holiday to holiday), dynamic and translating inner rhythms of another culture. More importantly, what is letting people become loyal consumers is not only this ludic experience but specific utopian values transmitted by this “wrapped” culture; viz. values of freedom and inclusivity “public space [of a Starbucks coffee-house] allowing for anonymity, sense of communal belonging and individual control” (ibid., 352).

A standart packaging of different products in QSR<sup>46</sup> conveys the same idea. For example, the ergonomics of wraps standart packaging includes stimulation of symbolic „undressing“ (Fig. 9). An ergonomic strip at packaging helps to consumer to open the product with rolling movement. This special mini-ritual intends to bring foretaste of pleasure and festivity, from one point of view, and

---

<sup>46</sup> QSR – quick service restaurants such as McDonald’s, KFC, Burger King etc.

to actualize the mythological journey to the locus of pleasure, from another point of view.



**Figure 9.** Packaging of McWraps in McDonald's.

Floch found out two basic strategies of consumers' valorization of physical journey: they are strategy of valorization of continuities vs. discontinuities. Those two attitudes are fitting towards a mythological representation of individual's life as well. To put it shortly, in the first case the life journey is represented as a goal-setting (dedicated towards certain aims and determined by some reason-mission), and in the second case as a strolling (or a discontinuous process). The first strategy is represented by mythological mind as a mythologeme of Fate, and the latter is represented by the mythologeme of Course. The both mythologemes create mythological chronotope of creating domestic locus in chaotic world where reassurance is needed. It might be said metaphorically that the mythologeme of Course and the mythologeme of Fate represent two ideas of life: the first one is a strategy of life as a set of responsible choices and the second one is a strategy that everything happens for some dispensation hidden behind.

In terms of critical theory and consumer culture, those two strategies correspond to the type of behaviour of "consuming the world" and "being consumed by the world". The latter is a phenomenon of consumption of the active mind inside the maze of mosaic and diverse mass culture life. Apparently, the most valuable source that can be ever consumed is time of one's personal life, as this is the main building element of constructing one's personality and uniting life from the beginning to the end in a philosophical sense. Consequently, the time of active self-awareness can be easily compared to the thread of Theseus uniting his entrance and exit in the maze of diversity of cultural forms catching attention and thus taking apart personality into many pieces and multiplying personality's identity in contemporary environment of



multimedia. The thread of active mind does not let a person to lose his/her own integrity inside the maze. Acquiring integrity is crucially important for setting balance and borders between inner and external world of contemporary culture.

Thus, the mythologeme of Course and the mythologeme of Fate are inextricably connected to each other as well as to the circle of challenges of determinism/randomness, predictability/unpredictability, chaos and cosmos opposition, choice and negotiation. Within mythological narrative the mythologeme of Course, similarly to the mythologeme of Fate, takes a shape of implicit Adjutant which helps for the Subject of narrative to find his inner freedom as a sought-after weal.

### **2.3 Mythologeme of Universe (World Tree)**

Related keywords: *time and space, world order, cosmos, Universe, UFOs, foreign galaxies, traveling in (beyond) time and space.*

Related existential values: *meaningful world, goal-setting.*

The mythologeme of Universe encapsulates a model reflecting global world picture that is incorporated in mass culture texts. It is related to the Ancient idea of Origin, and in Ancient mythology it was often embodied in the symbol of World Tree, Tree of Life, Celestial Tree, Tree of Edge, Shaman Tree. It was a universal idea explaining the model of the world of several human settlements or communities (Toporov 2010[1973]). Toporov used the particular symbol of World Tree to name the mythologeme as a universal of culture. His comparative analysis showed that the representation of World Tree mythologeme affected diversity of cultural texts throughout the history of mankind (religious and cosmological ideas, arts, architecture, planning of settlements, choreographs, rites, games social structures, in word-poetic ideas and language, and even probably in some peculiarities of mind). In Ancient times this mythologeme was an integral reflection of the past, present, and future perception. In addition, it was embodied in the idea of hierarchy and subordination. The idea of hierarchy (“ιερός” – sacred, “αρχή” – authority) was articulated in medieval times and connected to the Christian worldview. Going back to the ancient times, the mythologeme of World Tree obtained a great importance as far as the Eternal cosmos was the core of awareness about the world around. Genus (family) used to be considered as one of the constituents of Cosmos, and every single human being was an element constituted the genus as a microcosmos. Consequently, a human being was a constituent of the world order, incorporated into the system of Cosmos, and he was aware about that. Usually Cosmos was constituted from human world towards above- and underworlds.

All this used to be reflected in customs and rites; unalterability and accuracy of their repetition (reproduction) had a sacral function of preservation of memory of previous generations who had known mystery of life in concord and harmony with Cosmos. This idea within the mythological system was then

extrapolated further onto social relations within *geni*. In a broader perspective, the idea of inclusion into cosmic hierarchy was closely connected and intertwined with the idea of responsibility towards the Cosmos. It is then no great surprise as to why in all traditional societies the marriages were fixed without necessary consent of the spouses, but by strictly following the traditions and rules. A personal will had no role or weight within this paradigm and for this type of worldview the main intention was to preserve the genus, and thus the Cosmos. That is precisely why premarital liaisons would be considered a taboo in these societies also as unmarried women delivering a newborn were severely banished. Thus, the mythologeme of World Tree was a central constituent of individual's life.

Despite the huge scientific and technical progress and new ideas about the construction and Origin of the Universe, the contemporary mythologeme of World Tree, namely the Universe mythologeme, is commonly met in subjective experiences connected to different modes of life/death inquiries. For example, the Big Bang theory translated into mass culture acquires a form of a cosmogonic myth. Contemporary mythologeme of the Universe in mass cultural texts (movies, media discourse, popular science narratives, books and so on) reflects pretty much the same universal model of “underworlds”, middle (actual) world and “above” world as well as their interconnections by means of some “mysterious” principle, sometimes articulated by extraterrestrial creatures or spirits.

As a matter of fact, a variety of mass culture texts about world model has set contemporary men in the same situation as ancient human beings within their cosmogonic mythological system. There are stories about UFOs, foreign galaxies, traveling in time and space. Generally this mythologeme functions as an intertextual explanation of the world order integrity within mass culture mythological mind (as the most popular idea about world order being translated through mass culture texts). The movie “Interstellar” (2014) demonstrates this mythologeme through incorporation of different actual theories of the Universe origin and operation. This movie evoked a vast amount of scientific discussions in academic communities, and at the same time it also demonstrates its relevance for mass audience<sup>47</sup>. The mythologeme of Universe was the main motif of this movie. It was explicated through the model of the integrity and cross-intersection of time and space via the energy-power of gravity as a mysterious underlying principle of the world. So the gravity functioned as a portal, a window, between the worlds (Earth and “above” world from outside the Black hole) and between the times (beyond time) (past, present and future). In terms of ancient mythology it could be imagined as a World Tree or a world model, which is not a structure reconstructed after empirical experience, but a theoretical design of the immense for general human perception phenomena.

---

<sup>47</sup> The benefit of the movie constituted by world's box-office takings in relation to budget was 672 720 017 \$ to 165 000 000 \$ (proportion: 4,1/1); just to compare: Fifth element (1997) had a proportion 2,9/1 or Armageddon (1998) – 3,9/1.

As the above example clearly demonstrates, the mythologeme of Universe includes certain pre-knowledge or pre-feeling about the existence of other spaces and a linkage/interconnection between *topi* (spaces-locations) of the actual space and other spaces (Cosmos); there is a principle of their interconnection (portal, window). The idea of “windows” is omnipresent in contemporary mass culture. Technically it is presented by the phenomenon of “wrapped” culture and borrowed landscape, which play the role of the symbolic windows to another worlds. In this manner, the simultaneous mythological teleportation to another time and space is being fulfilled.

Yet another example we can find in the Roswell UFO incident (1947), which appeared to be one of the greatest mystifications of the 20th century. There were several documentaries published focusing on an autopsy of an alien. It acquired popularity because this incident as a narrative involved an idea of a possibility to touch/prosect another world/galaxy through its artifact as a window. The alien in this story seemed to bring about the Other/alien “wrapped culture” by his presence.

The idea of a window, or a “portal” is generally embedded in culture as a metaphor of border between semiospheres and as a threshold between different cultural spaces. In this respect, the most “tangible” embodiment of the “window” metaphor is a threshold with a digital dimension of mass cultural texts. The Internet of things allows us to engage with virtual reality as a continuation of our real life. For example, “Castorama: Le papier plein d’histoires”<sup>48</sup> (France, 2017) offers an application for making characters depicted at wallpapers alive on the screen of a tablet computer. The chosen character obtains a 3D shape and begins acting on the screen in accordance to the narrative he belongs to; thus, a fairy-tale steps forward to the reality through the “window” of the screen. In this way reality and digital space appear to be intertwined. Physically those spaces have different essences (both of them are parts of material world and digital world) but they are linked together by the idea of their unity. The same mechanism constitutes the mythologeme of Universe reflecting the existential unity of mass culture world and the common idea of Universe structure. In other words, due to the mythologeme of Universe heterotopic spaces of mass culture world represent a united system, and this unity acquires existential, focused and teleological meaning.

The idea of a “window” is particularly important for traditional cultures where semi-mythological, semi-religious perception of the world has been preserved most strongly in mundane consciousness. For example, due to Akhmetova’s post-soviet culture research, the TV screen is perceived nowadays as either a provider of demonic entities (similarly to mirror, window and water surface, which used to be treated as a threshold between worlds in previous times) or as an instrument for peeking, observing and influencing human beings

---

<sup>48</sup> Presentation of Castorama wallpapers at the official website of Culture Pub. Accessed 29. 08.2019: <http://www.culturepub.fr/videos/castorama-papier-peint-le-papier-plein-d-histoires/>

(conspiracy theories) (2008: 218–219). In this fashion, the screen becomes a message in itself (according to McLuhan’s idea of “media is a message”) (1994[1964]) and as a message it refers to the mythological type of thinking.

The screen as a symbol of a window is represented in many mass cultural texts. For example, in the Japanese-American movie “The Ring” (2002, Gore Verbinski), where the demonic creature appears from the well onto the TV screen. Another example is a weird scene in a TV show “Danger 5” (2012), where the lady is being shot through the telephone handset. Those ideas have transformed into a large number of superstitions of contemporary urban folklore; for example, that pregnant women should not watch TV because “TV is a demon and demon sits inside it” (ibid., 219). Akhmetova compares this superstition with a common one that babies acquire the traits of the persons their mothers used to look at during their pregnancy (mythological perception of influence acquiring sameness by proximity). In addition, she compares it with the taboo for pregnant women to look into mirror or water for a long time in traditional cultures (ibid., 219).

As Mosco argued back in 2004, “Today, cyberspace has become the latest icon of the technological and electronic sublime, praised for its epochal and transcendent characteristics and demonized for the depth of the evil it can conjure” (2004: 24). In this respect, Microsoft Co. invention of the *Windows* software system became a cultural sign of the whole epoch, as far as Internet provides the “window” to the world through the screen of a personal computer. Following McLuhan’s idea about the global village, the world that is intertwined with countless technologies, one might say that nowadays the Web 2.0 world found itself almost on a palm with Google maps navigation, CCTV cameras, web calls free communication, social networks, virtual reality, etc. All those new technologies allow anyone to be virtually present in many corners of the Earth and even on a orbital station at the very same moment. At the same time, new technological possibilities dissipate focus of the mind. One personality can possess several virtual identities at the very same moment through different media and, thus, appearing in different contexts. This leads to the phenomenon that Jameson calls cultural *schizophrenia*, or a “breakdown of the relationship between signifiers” (Jameson 1992).

Another kind of window representation in mass culture is smart glasses (e.g. Google glasses). Together with Web 2.0 possibilities, smart glasses provide new ways of experiencing reality and creating of augmented reality/ies. An integrated global positioning system (GPS) “alters the way people look for and interpret signs of spatial orientation” (Gaines 2015: 373). To sum up, smart glasses are successors of smartphones, which appeared as extensions of one’s body and mind (as all technological inventions according to McLuhan 2003[1964]). On the one hand, being mainly a phone, a smartphone amplified and extended the reach of a voice and the possibility to be heard by a receiver situated on another side of the Earth. On the other hand, a smartphone became an extension of memory of its owner (possibility to note contacts, photos and other information). What is more, within mass culture semiosphere “the mobile

phone represents the presence of others, an index to a virtual world without bodies, and a power to command the attention of individuals far from the location of a caller” (Gaines 2015: 373). It could be said then that being inventions of a technological “window”, smartphones, smart wallpapers and other gadgets with screens increased heterotopy in real world.

Notably, the phenomenon of new experiencing reality through gadgets creates a fruitful space for myth generation. The mythological thinking continues to unite the splitted pieces of the world in the integral whole either by inertness of perception or because every day consciousness does not catch all complicated peculiarities of smart inventions. The mythologeme of Universe appears in this situation as a tension of mind for integrating fragmented pieces of experiences through different windows into a strong system or integral picture of the world. It has existential meaning for an individual who aims at preserving self-integrity in a ruptured world.

The idea of a dissipated picture of the world is also related to the notion of “transmedial world”, which reflects a complex materiality of such texts as “Star Wars”, “Harry Potter“, “The Lord of the Rings”, “The Game of Thrones”, “Pokemons” and many others (Buckingham 2003, 2007). The complex materiality of texts means that they are retranslated through almost all famous types of mass culture forms. In the case of Pokemons, for example, there are cartoons, comics strips, clothes with images of the characters, toys, video and computer games (e.g. “Pokemons Go”), which all together shape the symbolic reality around the same symbolic core. Klastrup and Tosca call such mass culture sub-systems “transmedial worlds” (TMW) and emphasize their integrity around a certain inner core that is a “mental image”. According to their definition:

Transmedial worlds are abstract content systems from which a repertoire of fictional stories and characters can be actualized or derived across a variety of media forms. What characterises a transmedial world is that audience and designers share a mental image of the “worldness” (a number of distinguishing features of its universe). The idea of a specific world’s worldness mostly originates from the first version of the world presented, but can be elaborated and changed over time. (Klastrup, Tosca, 2004: 409)

There are at least three constituents of *worldness* of any TMW, which are *mythos*, *ethos* and *topos*. Thus, the preservation of the worldness of any TMW depends on “the designers’ ability to identify and implement the core elements of the ur-world without betraying its topos, ethos and mythos” (Klastrup, Tosca 2004). In their research, they highlight that these are fictional mass cultural texts that have their own mythos among other criteria (chronotope, ethos). However, there are cases in which the mythos of a fictional world is intertwined with archaic mythologemes in culture and in which they are implemented into real life. I will take a closer look to this case in the next subchapter with the case of Darth Vader as a Ukrainian politician.

The “worldness” of the Disneyland appears as a uniting semantic principle of heterotopia of its physical space, time and all the texts it alludes to; altogether they create a unique space of a fairytale together with all its rules and emotions. Having being included into a sphere of existential reflections, this complex system of the Disneyland’s transmedial world involves the mythologeme of Universe as a bridge uniting childish fantasy, mythological perception of the world and available scientific knowledge and experience.

In a way, the cyberspace enables explosion of opportunities and necessities to engage in mythological thinking as many narratives often lead to the emergence of mass cultural practices on the fuzzy demarcation line between fictional and real world. There were many projects to create cross-platforms of a fictional universe such as Bridget Johns cross-platform adaptation (Bignell 2002: 209–210), or modern multiplatform adaptation of Jane Austin’s “Welcome to Sanditon”<sup>49</sup>. Their main idea is to engage people to play roles around one narrative where users can develop initial plot in the cyberspace.

A great number of mass cultural “worldnesses” are widespread and popular all over the world today. They are available through “windows” enabling possibility to “move” from patchiness of time and space to those worldnesses which are often perceived as intertwined with reality within mass culture discourse. While being a form of entertainment, they at the same time invoke existential interrogations and metaphysical ponderings upon life releasing in refracted model of the world – the mythologeme of Universe. It offers an alternative to rational explanations of the world integrity and origin which otherwise appear as eclectic ones. This also means that the mythologeme of the Universe pinpoints to the past events as an established [mythological] reality.

To sum up, mass culture mythologeme of Universe works for uniting heterotopy of mass culture narratives into integral and intelligible system. It appears as an Object implying need for integral world picture as a ground zero for self-identification. It reveals itself through a contraposition of We and Them that constitutes the model of the Cosmos in its integrity of time and space, where the observation center is situated in *hic et nunc*. The main function, fulfilled by the mythologeme of Universe, is explaining (translating) the aenigma of the world order into familiar common cultural language (cultural categories, codes).

## 2.4 Mythologeme of Catastrophe (Flood)

Related keywords: *life and death, community life, life and destiny of mankind, future, Doomsday, Apocalypse, Armageddon, salvation, happy-end.*

Related existential values: *hope.*

---

<sup>49</sup> Official Youtube channel of Pemberley Digital for a project Welcome to Sanditon. Accessed 29.08.2019: <http://www.pemberleydigital.com/welcome-to-sanditon/>

The mythologeme of Catastrophe relates to the one discussed above but unlike the mythologeme of Universe it points towards future. The mythologeme of Catastrophe has derived from an ancient mythologeme of Flood which is present in all archaic mythological systems. This mythologeme is emanated from a folded plot about the collapse of the World and the salvation of the selected ones in narratives about future. This is a very old idea and universal image that appears and is explored in many narratives of mass culture discourse. Eliade insisted that the idea of Flood is interconnected to cosmogonic (origin) myth of the World creation and to the death of the world at the same time (1995[1964]: 56). It also includes temporary domination of antinorm above norm, chaos above cosmos that resembles carnival anti-behaviour. Later on this narrative was recalled and lived out in calendar-agrarian (usually Spring) festivals (carnivals).

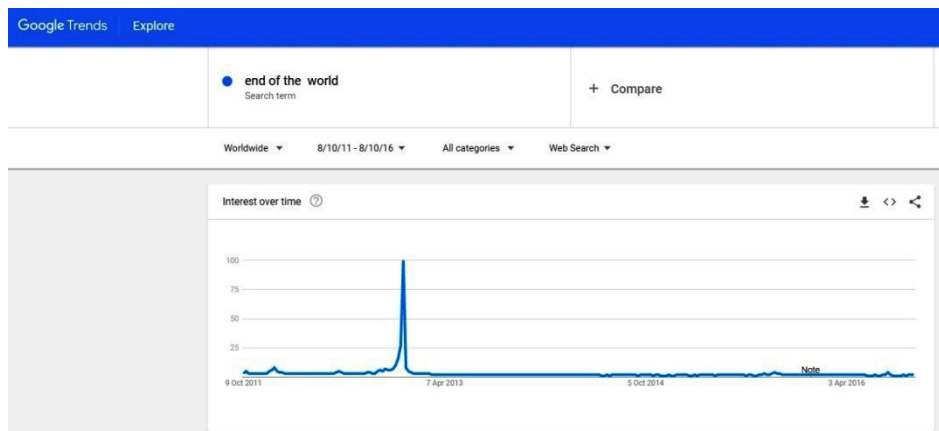
Despite the fact that archaic mythologies in primeval times did not contain eschatological<sup>50</sup> ideas as a linear anticipation of the “end of the world” in distant future, there certainly have been cosmological and etiological myths about world catastrophes discretely separating past epochs from one another as well as calendar myths about death and resurrection of nature/deities. Death and neither world were interconnected to the idea of the end of the world in future (Kozin, Akhmetova 2005: 242). Eschatological ideas started to appear in full sense from the turn of cyclical to linear perception of time<sup>51</sup>. In accordance with this strategy the end of the world is the crucial last point of world’s history. “Apocalyptic catastrophe might be also associated to liminal span of interregnum within context of so named rites of passage, also it can be associated to initiation” (Akhmetova 2005: 233). However, Nekliudov contra argues that the eschatological topics could be elaborated both within cyclic and linear times, as long as the eschatological myths could be conceived as a reversed cosmogony: the End of the world is a passage from cosmos to chaos (Nekliudov 2005: 15–16).

The mythologeme of Catastrophe (Flood) appears in mass culture discourse as a mythological interpretation of some significant point/event and it is directed to future. In movies it can be narratives about extraterrestrial menace (asteroid, aliens, spaceships, etc.) or some global terrestrial catastrophes. The mythologeme can be treated as an Adversary according to actantial model. The most significant case of the mythologeme of Catastrophe in mass culture of recent times is the topic of the End of the World followed by expiration of Maya calendar. Google Trends tool demonstrates that the amount of searching requests for „end of the world“ reached to the highest 100 possible points between December 16th to December 22nd, which is 50 times more than average of the same request in any other time (Fig. 10).

---

<sup>50</sup> From Ancient Greek “eschatos” which means “the last one”.

<sup>51</sup> Eschatological ideas about the Doomsday were brought along and elaborated by Judeo-Christian texts of culture.



**Figure 10.** Amount of requests „end of the world“ on the Internet during 2011–2016 according to Google Trends tool (accessed 29.08.2019).

A previous significant activation of the mass culture mythologeme of Catastrophe was at the turn of the Millennium 12 years before. The narratives about the turning points in world history have been widely explored in mass culture discourse. The motto of the brand “Lotus” in their ad campaign of 2012 reads: “Enjoy every moment, the 2012 is coming”, where the first part of the utterance „*Enjoy every moment*“ is a call for carnival behaviour, which implies anticipation of a reset and being back in a beginning. Although it is determined by the value of hope and anticipation of the changes for good, it also implies a moment of unpredictability of the future and a possibility of negative events to take place after the particular turning point. Thus, “enjoying every moment” appears as last possible chance of joy and, therefore, increases its value.

Another form of activation of this mythologeme is the recurring calendar or social events, like celebrating the New Year (in some countries also Christmas) or attending famous festivals and contests, which are supported by every possible forms of mass communication (ads, TV, Internet, etc.) from year to year (The Oscars Ceremony, The Eurovision Song Contest). The mythologeme of Flood (as a more archaic mode) brings to foreground a certain collective anticipation of some zero point in life where carnival behaviour is highly welcomed like during Black Friday shopping which bears great resemblances to religious practices (Gladarev 2006).

In Russia, the celebration of the New Year is one of the central events of the cultural semiosphere. Ever since the Soviet times, when the New Year celebration substituted Christmas, it has been celebrated in a noble and grand scale. As a matter of fact, mass culture communication calls to celebrate the night from the 31st of December to the 1st of January as a social event of common “death” and “re-birth”. The narratives translated through media campaigns (TV, adverti-



sements, movies, songs) and designing and decorating public spaces emphasizes this mythologeme immensely. Many mass culture narratives are dedicated to the idea about miracles that are going to happen only on this “magic” night or even on the more magic moment of the actual turning point of the two years. The chime of bells at midnight of the 1st of January is a delimitation border between “death” and “new birth”, old life and new life, fears/hopes and the release. It includes two semes “anticipation” and “negotiation” which means that unlike in ancient narratives, the mass culture mythologeme of Flood always describes future or “conventional” future (in movies). If a mythological type of mind in general is a means for modelling the world, the mythologeme of Flood is a constituent modelling representation of an existential value of hope.

Notably, the same mythologeme emerges also on the threshold of mass culture and political discourse. It is always connected to significant events that supposedly change the march of history and are reflected by mythological mind. The collapse of the Soviet Union (as well as the collapse of the Russian Empire 80 years before that) was expressed in folklore as a sign for the end of the world – the mythologeme of Catastrophe (Levkievskaja 2005: 192) – apparently because the mass culture discourse in the Soviet reality was intertwined with political reality and heavily mythologized (Saulenko 2001, Levkievskaja 2005: 179–180). This mythologeme has become prevalent in TV news and viral media content (Saveljeva 2013), and it even has been thought to be one of the reasons that through the political and everyday discourse led to financial crisis in Russia as a consequence (Kozin, Akhmetova 2005: 243).

Nekliudov points out that eschatological myths tell us about anticipated future in that they might include anticipation of impending catastrophe but precise visions can depend on the toolbar of knowledge and ideas determined by cultural-historical context (Nekliudov 2005: 15–16). Narratives about the Armageddon and the End of the World which folded in recent past and in a more global scale in movies and other texts were largely evoked by the buzz around the threshold of the Millennium (technical eschatology) and the expiration of the Maya calendar in 2012. There are other issues for invoking such dispositions such as the “heat death” of the Universe, impoverishment of environment and sources, thinning of Ozon Layer and so on and so forth. In local contexts ecological or political crises also can appear as triggers for actualization of this mythologeme (e.g. Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 or Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986 (Akhmetova 2005: 214).

The main peculiarity of the mass culture narratives, where the mythologeme of Catastrophe appears, is unavoidable danger from super-mighty, uncontrollable forces, either from natural environment (“Twister” 1996, “The day after tomorrow” 2004), or from extraterrestrial forces (“Armageddon” 1998, “The Fifth element” 1997), or monsters (“Godzilla” 1998, 2014), or human-produced technologies that go beyond of control (“Terminator” 1984, 1991, 2003, “The Apocalypse” 1997, “The 5th wave” 2016). Akhmetova mentions that zombie-apocalypse is a descendent narrative from folk-stories about vampires and ghouls (2005: 224). This mythologeme is sometimes used in advertisements as

the minimal semantic unit to capture attention by way of contrasting itself to extreme safeness of some good (“Cocroache apocalypse”, “Axe effect”, ultra HDTV job interview).

The mythologeme of Catastrophe appears in folklore texts also as a connotation of an Antichrist against the background of Christian cultural context in time of crises (ibid.). However, reciprocally this mythologeme also emerges in mass culture texts in times of wealth and prosperity e.g. in many contemporary movies. This ambivalence constitutes universality of this mythologeme, as long as it corresponds to destructive inner idea of thanatos (described by Freud) that is unavoidable inner peculiarity of every human being and culture. J.Lotman defines myth as an autocommunicative process, “myth always says something about me. [...] it organizes the world of a listener” (2000b[1992]: 153]). Then it appears symptomatically that the mythologeme of Catastrophe highlights cultural request for mystery of death (e.g. as it is presented in movie “The Surprise”, 2015). This movie clearly describes death as a commoditized escape from the wealthy world.

The main peculiarity of mass culture narratives containing the mythologeme of Catastrophe is a resolution leading to happy-end. As an actant mythologeme of Flood appears to be Adversary for a Subject searching for reassurance and enjoying life. It is always conquered with the help of an Adjutant and an Object – life and joy – is being gained. Syntactically mythologeme of catastrophe stands against to happy-end and constitutes the mythological idea of endurance and reassurance about the future.

All mass culture forms where the mythologeme of Catastrophe (Flood) emerges are triggered by fear of unpredictable future as far as the mythologeme of Catastrophe reflects mythological experience of some undesirable event of future and rebirth. It is closely related to the mytheme of Transformation which expresses the idea of rebirth in a new condition; idea about immortality as cultural category following after death.

Thus, the main function of the mythologeme of Catastrophe turns out to be translating the existential fears of global unpredictability into confidence about stabilization. It is achieved via playing through thanatic motifs and reassurance by creating a mythological chronotope of salvation. Clearly, then, this mythologeme is relevant for preserving the model of the universe embodied in the image of community (whole mankind). Last but not least, it contributes towards preservation of identity and integrity of individuals. The mythologeme of Catastrophe plays role of Adversary and sets time-space within mass cultural mythological narrative. Notably, unlike its ancient counterpart (the Flood mythologeme), the mythologeme of Catastrophe in mass culture sets mythological chronotopes in future but does not explain past events.

## 2.5 Mythologeme of Mother Nature

Related key words: *motherland, eutopia, mother, nature, culture, femininity vs. masculinity.*

Existential values: *search for inner authenticity and identity.*

The mythologeme of Mother Nature is a core element in advertising campaigns related to the beauty industry and it carries one of the traditional (primeval) models of femininity in culture. Within actants schema it appears as an Adjutant.

When we go back to archaic times, we see that this mythological unit represented an idea of fertility of the soil (nature) as a pawn of all manhood (in narrow sense) and of feminine role of fecundate mother giving birth and nursing the all flesh (in wider sense). From one side, in accordance to archaic magic thinking, once a phenomenon had been given a name, it could be affected. From another side, the mythological personalization of those ideas was a method for ascribing symbolical meaning to the world and its phenomena, to grasp its origin and ontological principles. Accordingly, deriving from a common human desire to endue natural powers and elements with proper names (nouns), this mythologeme alludes to an important opposition of Nature vs. Culture embedded in culture. Attempting to create a strong rational system of the world, Rousseau introduced this opposition as an ontological principle of the human world, which matches with mythological world perception. However, challenging this idea, J.Lotman presumes that nature/culture opposition is merely a semantic opposition reflecting upon cultural perception of one's own entity rather than ontological opposition, because human beings cannot exist beyond culture predominantly as *human* being (Italics mine – L.Z.) (Lotman 1992: 9). This semiotic meta-position demonstrates the relationship of culture/nature within the semantic axis where two ends are implying one another and supposing qualitative relation between each other.

The image of a nurturing Mother (Earth, Nature) was in animated mythological perception embedded in such goddesses as Gaia (later, Demetra) in Greek mythology, Isis in Egyptian mythology, Nammu in Sumerian mythology, Makosh in Slavic mythology, etc. They were counterbalanced by the gods of sky or sometimes by the world of decedents (in Egyptian mythology) in each mythological system (Zeus, Osiris, Perun, etc.). The semantic oppositions implied by Mother Nature(Earth) and Father Sky included oppositions of female vs. male, damp vs. dry, horizontal vs. vertical, even vs. odd, naturalness of the process of *birth* vs. transcendental (social, cultural) idea of *war* (Ortner 1972:14).

In the 20th century, an extent discussion concerning the opposition between nature vs. culture was profoundly elaborated within the feminist discourse, which discovered the concealed symbolic opposition of female/male. The cultural construct of nature as a feminine principle is a widespread and universal idea. There are at least three possible positions of treating the feminine

principle within the opposition of culture and nature presuming that (1) woman is viewed as being closer to nature [than man], (2) as a middle position between culture and nature, or (3) it could be treated as a mediating element in the culture/nature relationship, and it could be read as having an ambiguous status between culture and nature (Ortner 1972: 27–28). Much later Colette radicalizes this idea by insisting upon the equation of nature and female principle,

as the identification of ‘woman’ with ‘nature’ is not new; it is part of a long-standing tradition in Western culture that associates woman with nature, while man is associated with culture. And it’s not uncommon to see representations of nature as woman in popular culture. (2012: 194)

Recent studies concerning the image of Nature in different texts of Western mass culture (Colette 2012), mother’s love in African FMCG advertising (Beahm 2012), female archetypes in the lexicon of perfumery (Stevens, Maclaran 2007), nature archetypes (Salvador 2011) as well as my own practice in marketing semiotic research clearly demonstrate the relevancy of the archaic images of mother nature in contemporary mass culture. The mythologeme of Mother Nature is either demonstrated by way of anthropomorphic representation of nature (which is the most universal and archaic form) or acquired by the images of Eve in the Garden of Eden, which is relevant for the three cultures of Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). The both variants convey the meaning of the traditional feminine role (Colette 2012), which is typical for all archaic (mostly agrarian) cultures<sup>52</sup>. Despite the strong feministic discourse of contemporary culture, the mythologeme of nature is still widespread in culture as a traditional feminine image of fecundate mother giving birth and nursing all the flesh; as well as a beautiful female character demanding maintenance<sup>53</sup>.

I will demonstrate this mythologeme circuit by an example of Mother Nature in Ukrainian contemporary culture, which is one of the possible cases of mythological semiospheres that has archaic rules. Ukrainian traditional (agrarian) culture derives from Proto-Indo-European primeval culture preserving in common not only natural motives but also a strong worship of Mother Nature, including both the feminine and maternal origins. One of the explanations of this type of worship can be found in the geographical position of the territory which has a mild climate, fruitful soil, diverse flora and fauna of the natural zone which not only attracted people to settle this land since the primeval times but continues to feed people to this day. As a consequence, the main activity of the inhabitants of contemporary Ukrainian territory was agriculture, which, no doubt, required a power of observation, and generally attentive attitude and hard labour. It also required mental aptitude of the

---

<sup>52</sup> *Gaia* (later, *Demetra*) in Greek mythology, *Isis* in Egyptian mythology, *Nammu* in Sumerian mythology etc.

<sup>53</sup> Lesya Ukraynka’s “*Lisova pisnya*” is a great example of mythological entwining of human beings and delicate nature.

peasants which is amply expressed in Slavic folklore throughout different ages. Last but not least, due to the geographical location the picturesque and eye-pleasing nature of this region is admiring and inspiring inhabitants. For this reason, nature as a subject continues to be an important part and parcel of Ukrainians.

The authentic folklore spread upon the territory inhabited by Slavic tribes includes many genres praising Nature as a supreme Subject. Nature was animated for Slavs from primeval times onwards, and that has produced a cult of Mother Nature that has become a central figure for the ancestors of contemporary Ukrainians.

It is evident that the one of the main gods of Slavic pagan religion was a goddess of earth with a name that later became to be used as the Damp Mother Earth. She was a correlative goddess with the thunderer Perun, who was a god of Sun and Sky; together they have constituted the primary mythological oppositions as they were discussed above. Consequently, all the primary customs and rites, as well as holidays, for primeval Slavs were intertwined with the agrarian calendar, which depended on nature's seasonal appearance and qualities. We can still see the relics of this awareness in everyday life of contemporary Ukrainians. Amongst them, for example, are particular respect towards bread; tradition to throw a handful of ground upon the hearse covering during funerals; interdiction to flow the ground during the Annunciation day – it is a common idea among farmers that earth has become pregnant and it shouldn't be touched this day.

Later, in Christian times, the cult of Oranta came to replace the goddess of Earth which was had the connotation of sacral protection, femininity and motherhood. One of the prominent examples of the contamination of the pagan and Christian images resonating with state discourse is the Motherland Monument in Kyiv erected in 1980 and devoted to the Victory in the World War II (appendixes 1, 2 and 3). The name of the monument alludes to the Mother Earth deity and the posture of this mythical *Mother* represents the typical *Oranta* posture lifting her hands up to the sky and forming the shape of a cup which is both Christian and archaic feminine symbol. Kaplunenko and Ryzhova insist that the archetype of mother is crucially important for Slavic culture. The researchers recall the famous Soviet ideological call of WW2 times which literally translates from Russian as: “Mother Motherland calls you”<sup>54</sup>. They have emphasized that this call proved to be very was efficient at the time. (Kaplunenko, Ryzhova 2013: 242). Both this message and the underlying idea of the monument of Mother Motherland, imply important allusions to mythological roots, where both Mother and Motherland are united in a sacral figure. Thus, a symbolic image of a strong Soviet woman was created there and then (Kys 2006:13). Moreover, during the times of Independence movement a new monument dedicated to the new independent nation of Ukrainians was erected

---

<sup>54</sup> In Russian: “Родина-мать зовет”.

at the Maidan Nezalezhnosti in Kyiv (the central square of the state). This monument is a statue of young woman also reproducing a posture of Oranta.

Thus, the strong connection of the Slavic culture with female images has been preserved by way of nature throughout the ages and it is embedded via feminine principles to this day. Virtually all *eco* brands of FMCG products (for example, Ukrainian beer brand *Chernigivske*, with a moto “Let’s build eco-Ukraine together”<sup>55</sup>) exploit the image of Mother Nature in Ukrainian mass culture semiosphere with an idea of admiration of the Motherland. Mineral water and pharmaceutical products also often bear this mythologeme as an embodiment of purity of their products. Ukrainian mineral water brand *Morshinska*<sup>56</sup> recently launched a creative project “Voice of water” in collaboration with Ukrainian musicians Onuka, DakhaBrakha, Katya Chilly and sound-producer The Maneken. The idea is to listen to the voice of nature and provide opportunity for nature to become a musician. Musicians set percussion onto rivers and creeks, so that flowing water could create unique authentic rhythms that musicians, in turn, could use for a vocal-instrumental composition (Fig.11). The inner narrative of this commercial text presents Mother Nature as a Subject who wants to express herself by music along with professional musicians.



**Figure 11.** Voice of water. Symphony made by nature, Onuka, DakhaBrakha, Katya Chilly and The Maneken. Promotion of *Morshinska*.

In the “New Year fairytale” advertising of a Moscovian bank in December 2016<sup>57</sup> (see Subchapter 2.2) the mythologeme of Mother Nature plays a role of a second Adjutant helping to gain femininity and feeling of motherhood for the Subject.

---

<sup>55</sup> Official Youtube channel of *Chernigivske* beer brand. Accessed 29.08.2019:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnGF-bXz4no>

<sup>56</sup> Official Youtube channel of *Morshinska* mineral water brand. Accessed 29.08.2019:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4Yb\\_TMa6wA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4Yb_TMa6wA)

<sup>57</sup> Official Youtube channel of Moscow Credit Bank. Accessed 29.08.2019:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fp5CK95yD0U>

The political advertising is also permanently exploiting this mythologeme. One of the brightest examples of this is a public image of a politician Yulia Tymoshenko (Kys 2006; Salem 2013). After the Euromaidan this mythologeme acquired a new relevance and significance. I will consider the case of politician Darth Vader in the Chapter 3 in relation to the dynamics of appearance of the Mother Nature mythologeme in correlation to the technology/culture opposition.

The Mother Nature mythologeme can be easily seen as a main symbol of a TV series “Ostannij moskal” (“The last *moskal*” – in Ukrainian) (2014–2015, the first season) and “Ostannij moskal. The Day of Judgement” (2015–2016, the second season). The whole narrative is based around two main oppositions alluding to two semiospheres of Ukrainian and Russian cultures. From the political point of view, they are represented by Ukrainians vs. moscovians (Russians), whereas more general connotation includes opposition of the mythologeme of organic Mother Nature vs. Technological Culture.

The mythologeme of Mother Nature is represented by the image of a character Ksenia, a gorgeous Ukrainian girl, whose physical authenticity is represented by her natural beauty, and inner authenticity is represented by traditional virtues. Her relation to the mythologeme of Nature is shown by way of her typical traditional femininity.

The Mother Nature mythologeme is discovered through a symbolic opposition to Ksenia by a *moskal* Valera, who is a techno-savvy, technologically addicted, and lazy urban guy emphasizing that he is better at intellectual work than in “handicraft for survival in wild mountains”. The semantic opposition is disclosed through cultural *artificiality* he represents in opposition to the Mother Nature mythologeme as well as via other oppositions such as masculinity (vs. femininity), urbanicity (vs. village), technology, and culture in general sense (vs. nature) and antagonistic culture in local sense (vs. Ukrainian/hutsul traditional culture). In another sense, then, it is also revealed through political context.

*Moskal* is an unofficial ethnonym, “negative nickname of Russians and inhabitants of Moscow, also as demonym which includes negative emotional characterization” in Ukrainian cultural and political semiosphere (Vepreva, Kupina 2014: 47). The general director of “1+1 media”, Alexandr Tkachenko, insisted that the title is an allusion to the TV reality show “The last hero” (media franchise of the American TV show “Survivor”), where only one person wins if he or she survives the wild conditions where he/she was placed in. Notwithstanding, the title still indicates antagonistic attitudes towards a relative from Moscow.

The mass culture political context becomes obvious from the very first episode. When Valera suddenly finds himself inside Carpathian forest, he is describing it in inner speech as follows: “Carpathian forest is not at all

dangerous as it is told in the news<sup>58</sup>: the sun is shining, the birds are singing, the funny animals are rushing – it is immediately obvious that no *Russian man* has set foot in here”. (13’47’’–14’00’’ Episode 1). This autocommunicative passage of Valera demonstrates auto-description creating an opposition of nature/culture, countryside/urban, Ukraine/Russia, female/male, mild/hard, wild/technological-savvy and moreover endurance/invasion, humbleness/ aggression from the very beginning, which will be revealed even further through the similar oppositions throughout all the episodes of the series.

The storyline is based on the adventures of a guy called Valera, who is a son of an Moscovian oligarch. His father was accused of fraud and that is why he leaves for London and sends Valera, his son, to a remote Ukrainian village in Carpathian mountains, where the uncle of Valera resides. Thus, Valera becomes a *moskal* for inhabitants of this village who evidently hate all moskals and want to kill them. Valera gains the first credit of trust when it is reported that Valera’s father inflicted financial damage to Russian citizens by his fraud in Moscow, so he inflicted damage to conventional enemies of the inhabitants of this village. For this very reason Valera’s father and Valera are not considered as enemies anymore but, on the contrary, they are treated as heroes. *Heroiam slava!*<sup>59</sup> (“Glory to heroes!” – in Ukrainian) – the inhabitants of the village are whooping to Valera when they get this news. It should be noted that “*Heroiam slava!*” gained a new relevance after the Euromaidan which, among other connotations, means the highest public recognition. It becomes, then, the first initiation of Valera in an Ukrainian village with a typical name *Velyki Vujky*<sup>60</sup> (*Great fellows* or *uncles* – in Ukrainian *vuiko* is “mother’s brother” or “an unfamiliar elderly man”). While Valera is still considered to be an alien he is forgiven now and he is not considered to be killed.

The interaction of the two semiospheres is shown by the clash of the Mother Nature mythologeme and its semantic opposition: the mythologeme of Culture. It is demonstrated by means of a love story of the two main characters: Ksenia and Valera. Love, in this narrative, appears as a mysterious means providing for anti-hero energy for initiation. Thus, eventually, Valera turns from an alien to a semi-alien, he recognizes the laws of Carpathian mountains and it even turns out that both of his parents are from the same village, which means that he is a *moskal* only by residence (“he is just unlucky to have been born in Moscow” – comments his uncle Ivan in the last episode of the first season). However, by his origin he is a *hutsul* (inhabitant of Carpathian mountains, which is a synonym of an Ukrainian in this context). Only due to this fact are all Valera’s virtues explicable, because a *moskal* “would never be so genuine as a *hutsul*”.

Mother Nature brings him back from wandering in an artificial world of “pseudo values” to the naturalness of the “pure self”: it turns Valera from a

---

<sup>58</sup> Here is an allusion to Russian TV propaganda about “dangerous inhabitants of Western Ukrainian region”.

<sup>59</sup> Героям слава! (Ukrainian).

<sup>60</sup> Великі Вуйки (Ukrainian).



*nonhominid* to a *human being*. This ironic plot demonstrates the opposition of Ukrainian/Russian through their love story, which has been represented in Ukrainian national literature and poetry from the likes of Taras Shevchenko onwards, who is quoted throughout the series. For example, “Make love, black-browed girls<sup>61</sup>, whoever but *moskals...*”<sup>62</sup> (translation mine – L.Z.) comes from Shevchenko’s, poem “Kateryna”<sup>63</sup> (1838–1839).

To sum up, this TV series locates an opposition of Ukrainian and Russian semiosphere through the key mythologeme of Nature, which is opposed to the mythologeme of Culture, or Technology. The mythologeme of Nature is represented through categories of female, mild, authentic, pure, sincere, and fair. This mythologeme is shown as forming a background and uniting all the inhabitants of a Ukrainian Carpathian village, which is opposed to the background of the cynic, urban, artificial and non-humanistic world of Moscow invaders (Valera and his father in the second season). In this case, the mythologeme of Mother Nature reveals itself as an implicit idea embodied in vivid images and characters, but this mythologeme can also take shape of an actant within the mythological narrative (Adjutant or Adversary). The mythologeme of Mother Nature is a universal mythological unit, which is revealed through the images of local traditional cultures and embodies authenticity which despite of feminist turn, stays relevant for mass culture in a form of traditional feminine role.

## 2.6 Mytheme of Transformation, Or Miracle

Related key words: *life-death-immortality*, *Weltanschauung Categories of Ultimate Bases (WCUB)*, *mandala*, *circle*.

Related existential values: *not applicable to mythemes as they do not play as actants*.

Unlike mythologemes, mythemes cannot be discovered as actants of a mythological narrative. Rather, they reveal the general schema/direction of its development. Following Lévi-Strauss, I presuppose that in the process of myth perception, individuals distinguish between mythemes spontaneously. Consequently, some mythemes remain to be a remnant, which makes sense only as a result a certain abstracting, though. I distinguish between two universal ontological mythemes, which can reveal their structure through WCUB in mass culture texts.

As I pointed out earlier, I find that three *Weltanschauung Categories of Ultimate bases* might constitute the ontological mytheme of Transformation, or

---

<sup>61</sup> That is a synonym of beautiful Ukrainian girls.

<sup>62</sup> „Кохайтеся, чорнобриві, та не з москалями...” (Ukrainian)

<sup>63</sup> This poem tells about life story of Ukrainian girl Kateryna who fell in love with a Russian soldier. She delivered a child from him, but he abandoned her and she was exiled from her village. This poem tells about a further tragic destiny of Kateryna and her child.

Miracle. Broadly speaking, WCUB constitute a universal composition for cultural texts in general and myths in particular.

The circle is one of the most widespread mondial symbols that was often instantiated/concretized in a sensory form of a circinate serpent and other orbicular objects. [...] that is mandala which takes proudly its place among orbicular symbols and exemplifies “circular matrix” of all texts of culture and encapsulates the triad: “*life-death-immortality*” (Kyrylyuk 2008: 228)

In mass culture discourse, this mytheme appears in cases when the topic of miracle is exploited. It appears in plenty of mass culture narratives (especially in those of advertising) in cases when a miracle happens as a sudden (not dialectical) transformation. That can be further exemplified also by consumer narratives. In one of my recent applied researches, I noticed that one of the segments of target audience for a sports brand is especially sensitive to the mytheme of Miracle apropos fitness trainings and it [Miracle] became their main inspiration for exercising. The representatives of the target audience of the both genders demonstrated that via their narratives in diaries and via pictures they have chosen as the exemplification of their inspiration. There are several examples of the respondents’ main inspiration for doing sports of verbal and visual exemplification (Fig. 12):

“ I like to *overcome myself* every time and understand that there is *nothing impossible*”  
(M, 28 y.o.)<sup>64</sup>



**Figure 12.** Illustration of aspiration for doing sports for female respondents from Moscow, 32 y.o. and 30 y.o.

---

<sup>64</sup> The material is taken from the respondents’ diaries which were received during a recent research project for a sports brand.

Besides the direct metaphor of a miracle “to overcome myself” or “nothing impossible”, the respondents often applied metaphors of wonderful transformations of celebrities, who had acquired success and acknowledgment (*new life*, or *immortality*) after their transformation. The miraculousness of their transformation is expressed in its immediacy, which, unlike rational mind, is possible for mythological mind

More often the mytheme of Transformation appears as a core of brand identity (Zaporozhtseva 2016: 41–42). I will demonstrate that through the case of Power Balance Bracelet, a global brand, which became local due to exploiting the Miracle mytheme which was relevant for the local market<sup>65</sup>.

By way of introduction, I give you just a little bit of information about this case. The Power Balance bracelet is a brand of bracelets with holograms and they emerged in 2007 on the Western market (USA, Australia). Their promotion campaign broadcasted an idea about the accessory “resonating with and responding to the natural energy field of the body”, and “increasing sporting ability”<sup>66</sup> for people doing sports. Arrogating initially to be a medical equipment, the Power Balance bracelet was thoroughly examined by Australian Competition and Consumer Commission in 2010 and it was proved that there was no additional effect evoking by this bracelet except placebo. This brand then got *Choice 2010 Shonkys Award*<sup>67</sup> as being “a very successful marketing scam”.

Nevertheless, after this mishap the company was transformed into Power Balance Technology in 2011 and is now being marketed as a sports accessory producer on Western market. What is interesting, however, is that after restructuring of the company, it refocused its market interests to Eastern Europe (Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan) where it gained an incredible success just by claiming that the basic grounds of the product effectiveness belong to “eastern philosophy and meditation”. Thus, after the sensational scandal which led to a penalty charge, the company still uses the same strategy and it works brilliantly again. Naturally, we want to know what is a reason of such a success?

To put it briefly, the idea for this bracelet derives from the common neo-shamanism and urban shamanism in USA and Eastern Europe in the overall framework of the New Age movement. There were certain objective historical and social-political reasons for the successful assimilation of these practices in the Eastern Europe countries and in the former republics of USSR<sup>68</sup>. What is important, is that in this system of beliefs human beings are treated as parts of natural totality and connected to other forms of nature but they do not exceed it. Nature is perceived here in a wider sense, especially in the context of urban

---

<sup>65</sup> I partly explored this case also in the research paper “Mythologemes and mythemes: Semiotic markers of myth in contemporary mass culture” (Zaporozhtseva 2016: 41-42).

<sup>66</sup> Wikipedia page about Power Balance. Accessed 29.08.2019:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power\\_Balance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Power_Balance)

<sup>67</sup> *Choice Shonkys Annual Award* is an Australian award given to the most unreliable, dishonest, poor or of dubious quality products and brands.

<sup>68</sup> There is a detailed research by Valentina Kharitonova published at official website of PostNauka. Accessed 29/09/2019: <http://postnauka.ru/video/48994>

culture. I perceive it precisely in the sense as I was considering it in the beginning of this thesis and the way Barthes insisted with his “overturning culture into nature”.

As the whole narrative of this bracelet appears first in the advertising, we can easily find it on the company’s official website. Unlike their US website<sup>69</sup> which provides no information about medical effects of this product but promotes it just as a groovy accessory, two different websites based on different Ukrainian domains promote Power Balance product as “not only an accessory but also as source of energy”<sup>70</sup>. Here is what the website says:

Power Balance is a unique technology that improves the human energy field and gives power to the organism [...] it reduces the negative impact of stress on your body, eliminates the lack of energy.  
[...] special high-tech hologram is responsible for the balanced distribution of the energy field into the body. When the balance of hologram comes in direct contact with the energy field in the human body, it creates waves which are unique to each organism. These waves provide a harmonious cycle of each individual energy field<sup>71</sup>.

There are many of quite universal notions among the key words of this message, such as *stress* or *lack of energy*, which play the role of empty signifiers within this message and, at the same time, they construct the holistic narrative about a *miracle* attracting a specific target audience which perceives this marketing communication through mythological mind.

From the perspective of empirical reality, the offer made in the advertising does not quite make sense. However, this kind of message intrinsically contains a strong mythological anticipation of transformation, including overcoming *death* (stress, lack of energy) without any additional efforts (just using the offered product as an adjutant within this mythological narrative).

In this case, the Power Balance bracelet is such an adjutant which without any force on the part of a subject helps to obtain energy and power within the brand narrative. People believe in this product as long as they believe in its possibility to transform them with the bracelet’s “magic” energy (Table 4). The mytheme of Miracle, or Transformation, reveals itself in other similar cases uniting the mythological mind with physical reality via specific magic adjutant which is a brand or a product.

---

<sup>69</sup> Website of Power Balance brand in USA. Accessed 29.08.2019:  
<http://www.powerbalance.com/default/technology>

<sup>70</sup> Website of Power Balance brand in Ukraine. Accessed 29.08.2019:  
<http://powerbalance.in.ua>

<sup>71</sup> Website of Power Balance brand in Ukraine. Accessed 29.08.2019:  
<http://powerbalance.com.ua/>

**Table 4.** How the mytheme works within narrative of Power balance bracelet.

	1	2	3
WCUB	Vital	Mortal	Immortal
Key-words	–	stress, lack of energy	reduces the negative impact of stress on your body, eliminates the lack of energy, balanced distribution of the energy field into the body, harmonious cycle of each individual energy field

Thus, the mytheme of Transformation deploys as an inner principle of mythological narrative roll-out from present to mythological future with a mandatory qualitative transformation of the initial state to another one which in the mythological mind is associated with the notion of a miracle. The transformation becomes possible due to a specific Adjutant (brand, product) within mythological narrative.

## 2.7 Mytheme of Backtracking and Mythologeme of Golden Age

Related key words: *life-death-life*, *WCUB*, *time and space*, “returning to the past”, *nostalgia*.

Related existential values (applicable to the mythologeme of Golden Age): *quest for integral explanation of the world*, *nostalgia for the past*.

Mythologies and religions of different cultures contain the mythologeme of “golden age”, which is supposed refer to a forever bygone era when everything was better, people were kinder, taller and cleverer, when food was more flavoursome and so on and so forth. In his last works, J.Lotman insists on a cyclic principle of natural phenomena, in contrast to a linear movement of history of culture and human history in general (Ivanov 2007[1996]: 181) that is valid for individual and collective mythological mind. In mass culture, “returning to the past” has become a special type of product which has a function of reassurance. Within mass culture texts, the strategy of “returning to the past” can be regarded as the mytheme of Backtracking.

For a rational mind, the centre of one’s life is spatially situated in himself and temporally in the moment of thinking. However, for the mythological mind, the existential centre of life is in one’s past, ultimately in the childhood as a longstanding subjectively overlived past. It is only natural for the mythological mind that something that is already overlived is familiar and habitualized, and in this way it is already mastered. The mastered time and space constitute the center of the semiosphere for the mythological mind; in this way the past is always attractive because of its familiarity for a subject of thinking.

Nesteruk claims that from cosmological perspective the importance of mystery of the occurrence of one's own life moment in conjunction with the impossibility of phenomenological reduction of its reason in one's own experience, is, in a global scale, comparable with the impossibility to solve the mystery of the Big Bang causes and conditions (Nesteruk 2012). "*The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence*" in other words, somewhere where we are not (*anymore* in the case of temporality); this proverb illustrates that the other space-time seems to be more attractive for the subject of thinking. Thus, if we imagine time axis, the most attractive is the "era" situated in one's phenomenological past, like in the childhood, youth or in some other specific time span, for example, in politics or culture.

Taking this into consideration, I suppose that the universal mytheme of Backtracking appears most commonly in mass culture discourses concerning childhood (Zaporozhtseva 2016: 43) or nostalgia. It becomes evident once we take into account that it is structurally always about the moment of *returning* to the bygone past. In addition, it is related to an archaic perception of daily and calendar cycle, to the march of night and day and to the nature that is dying and then coming alive again. As it is impossible to overlive the past literally, one can return there by a cyclic repetition of the same event. In mythological perspective the time axis of daily routine can be broken down by conviviality. Something *boring* is perceived as "painful" (we can dissipate here the category of *death* in a broad sense again) and it opposes to something *festive* (*vital*). So the break of the routine is incarnated from a *mortal* WCUB to the *vital* WCUB within narrative, but not by overcoming the death with some effort, rather just returning back to the vital category of being in the mythological perspective.

The most significant example of mass culture "returning to the past" text is a tradition of celebrating birthdays. Mass culture discourse widely promotes the cultivation of this day and, therefore, it is commonly perceived as a "special" event in every individual's year. All genres of mass culture texts broadcast the idea of the special centrality and importance of this day as an existential point to which one should be prepared for. Plenty of movies and advertising spots, off- and on-line services and applications, the gifts industry of, balloons, flowers and other genres strengthen this idea.

Another example of the festivity that breaks the everyday life is New Year or Christmas. For the same existential reasons, people try to buy presents to support this festivity mood, as it helps to return to the *mythological* childhood that is natural for everyone since all of us "are from our childhood as from one country", as aptly observed by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

These two situations are both related to the ritual of unwrapping gifts as a special bridge to one's childhood era. The unwrapping itself is a movement and revealing of the materiality of an object from the present to past. Moreover, in mass culture it symbolizes the attribute of childhood, for example, kinder-surprise which includes three layers to be unwrapped in order to find a toy: foil, chocolate and plastic container; chupa-chups and candies in a wrapper as well as fast-food wrapping which has not only utilitarian meaning but also becomes

a symbol of childish happiness of “unwrapping” related to the most common symbol of childhood in mass culture McDonald’s and its special offer for children a Happy Meal package.

McDonald’s space appears in this case as a narrative itself exploiting this mythologeme in dynamics,

Arches reverberate with archetypical mythic symbolism – they beckon people to march through them where they can expect a world of freedom from drudgery [*childhood space – L.Z.*]. Advertising campaigns reinforced this symbolism, entrenching it throughout society. McDonald’s was a place that would “do it all for you”, as one of its early slogans phrased it, keeping family members united at meal times (Danesi 2008: 67).

As this case evidently exemplifies, the mytheme of Backtracking reveals itself through the narrativity of space deploying the direction of mythological narrative from the present to the past, from the real moment to the feeling of “one’s own childhood”. At the same time, the mytheme of Backtracking is intertwined with the mythologeme of Golden Age, which stands for a universal topos within the mythological narrative possessing the features of Eutopia (Dreamland), or, in the ultimate sense, the Garden of Eden (Dreamland which existed in the past but is not available anymore). In McDonald’s case, the golden arc symbolizes the heterotopy of space: the mythological border separates real life from the eutopia of Golden Age beyond the golden arc.

The mythologeme of Golden Age lays bare an idea of heterotopy of public space related to mass cultural practices (shopping, eating in public spaces, entertaining, etc.) including profane space and special eutopic loci where time and space possess the time and space of Dreamland. Yet another successful global project exemplifying this mythologeme is Disneyland. Within mass culture discourse, it is a symbol of a dreamland; time and space of childhood in the contemporary world, which in the same manner is eagerly sought after both by adults as by children.

As Danesi has aptly observed, “Childhood is no longer just for children. It is part of the mythic unconscious of all of us – a mythology symbolized perfectly by the Mickey Mouse logo” (2008: 67). This statement holds true to the whole industry of “childhood”, which means that children fashion, goods and even brand toys or furniture are mostly aimed to cater for the desire of adults for mythological Golden Age, who acquire Golden Age locus in their apartments or houses by purchasing these goods. Gaming, in some respect, plays the same role as it is a strong pattern-practice bridging to childhood. Thus, besides being just entertainment, flash-mobes and media-events such as Gangnam Style, Harlem Shake or Ice-Bucket Challenge break the routine of everyday life by bridging it with the mythological eutopical time and space.

Sigmund Freud, in his “Moses and Monotheism”, expressed this point very succinctly when he stated: “Remote times have a great attraction – sometimes mysteriously so – for the imagination. As often as mankind is dissatisfied with

its present – and that happens often enough – it harks back to the past and hopes at last to win belief in the never forgotten dreams of a Golden Age” (Freud 1939: 115).

Thus, the mytheme of Backtracking reveals the backward direction of a mythological narrative where the focus is on “unwrapping the bygone past” related to mastered time and space as a center of semiosphere for a subject. This mytheme is tightly connected to the mythologeme of Golden Age, which is mythological Dreamland whose time and space is always situated in a desired and happy past, that is most often connected to the topic of childhood within mass culture discourse. Mythologeme of Golden Age can appear as an Adjutant (helping to Subject to set his or her identity) or an Object (desired time and space).

## **2.8 Findings: the basis for the classification of mythologemes and mythemes**

Structural elements penetrating texts as possible mythological forms can be classified by different criteria. I decided to classify the most common and meaningful of them by their structural principle: the emic units (mythologemes) and the ones possessing hybrid structure (mythemes).

It is (indeed) possible to classify the emic units by their subjects by way of analogy with ancient myths: cosmogonic, anthropogonic, and structuring social semiosphere. Cosmogonic mythologemes appear in the narratives about Universe and models of time and space and their origin. Those are the mythologeme of Universe, the mythologeme of Catastrophe and the mythologeme of Golden Age. Anthropogonic mythologemes are related to individuals’ life and its structure: the mythologeme of Fate and the mythologeme of Course. The mythologemes structuring social semiosphere through the quest of identity appear within mass culture narratives about collective memory. I discussed above the example of the Mother Nature mythologeme, there is also another mythologeme related to this group which is the Hero mythologeme. However, as it does not directly correlate to culture-nature mythological opposition, I left it out from the current discussion.

As to what concerns mythemes, there are other possible variants of them, which can be found within mythological narratives. Be that as it may, my point was to only analyse those which are universal ontological mythemes and reflect ideas about natural phenomena in culture and reveal them in mass culture texts. That is why I discussed mythemes through the WCUB and dissipated two of them – namely the mytheme of Transformation, or Miracle, and the mytheme of Backtracking.



## SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS II

In the Chapter II, I attempted to prove that 1) it is possible to allocate two specific types of structural units of mass culture mythology; 2) several archaic structural units of myth are alive and efficient nowadays and acquire certain contemporary forms within mass culture narratives. The main difference between the archaic structural units of myth and those within mass culture texts is that in ancient times they used to reflect upon dominant principles of the world picture, whereas the structural units of mass culture mythology are incorporated into patchwork of life as plenty of fragments in different fields of daily routine and culture in general.

I proceed from the findings of Lévi-Strauss, Jung and Kerényi, concerning the smallest structural units of myth, which are mythemes and mythologemes, to trace their manifestations within linguistics, ethnography, literature, political and culture studies, and develop their application to mass culture narratives expressing mythological mind. All mythologemes and mythemes cannot be entirely grasped as discrete elements. Rather, they are quasi-discrete units, relating to the context and revealing themselves in syntagmatic relations, although their quasi-discreteness is appearing at the paradigmatic level of texts. Stemming from the initial definition of mythologeme and mytheme, they appear as emic and hybrid structural units respectively, though, I suggest that mytheme is also in an additional mode as an invariant structure.

I follow J.Lotman's insight that myth becomes actual as autocommunication, so it says about listeners and organizes their world. It reveals as an aspiration of valorization that is possible to describe by Greimasian actantial model. The latter becomes a heuristic algorithm of mythologemes determination within mass culture narrative. Also applied the notion of Weltanschauung Categories of Ultimate Bases as a supplementary methodological tool for structural analysis of the mytheme.

I define mythologemes as universal invariants of mythological narrative resembling figurative kernels and expressing the most widespread and relevant human views about world. They can appear as actants within narrative. Mythemes, in my point of view, are invariant structural units deployed in mythological narrative resembling recurring motifemes that articulate their own entity in dynamics and development. In other words, mythologemes are paradigmatic invariants, mythemes are syntagmatic invariants. To all appearances, in acquiring peculiar modes, mythologemes and mythemes preserve sustainability within mass culture discourse, they refer to universal human senses, and could be seen as semiotic markers of myth in daily narratives.

Mythologemes and mythemes are dissipated and noticed by consumers during the process of decommunitization, which is a symbolic aspect of appropriation process of mass cultural goods. The decommunitization phenomenon means that goods and events transform their familiar meaning and utilitarian value to a unique subjective meaning and existential value for every single consumer depending on his or her anticipation. From a philosophical-

anthropological point of view, this shift often means activation of the mythological mind of the consumers; in this case, structural units of mass culture mythology attract attention of consumers to those narratives. Very often it is the most significant possibility to become meaningful in diverse environment of different cultural texts due to existential-mythological valorization.

I have demonstrated the instances of these units functioning within mass culture discourse. For this purpose, the examples of the mythologemes of Fate, Course, Universe, Catastrophe, Golden Age, and Mother Nature were examined. At least two universal ontological mythemes of Transformation and Repeating were also found. Mythologemes can play a specific actantial role (most commonly that of an Adjutant, Adversary or Object) and can describe chronotope within mass culture mythological narrative. Mythemes reveal an inner strategy of unrolling mythological narrative frontwards or backwards.

The mythologemes of Fate and Course fully reflect upon one of the main functions of myth, which is to grasp life as an integral whole. They emerge from the justice/injustice opposition, which is one of the most important semes penetrating mass culture discourse and one that hides behind the existential valorization and hence its mythological aspect. Justice or injustice often acquire a strong meaning of an independent, integral actant, which is capable of influencing the Subject within a narrative and, what is even more, to exist beyond the artistic text in real life, which is a strong marker of mythological mind. Those two mythologemes can be associated with an anthropogonic genre of myth so far as they explain personal life within autocommunication process. Mythologeme of Fate can be an Adjutant or Adversary within mythological narrative, mythologeme of Course appears as an Adjutant or an Object. They always relate to the search of Subject for a purpose of life and own existential way.

The mythologemes of Universe, Catastrophe and Golden Age express an archaic desire to grasp the world in its complexity and to find out its origin in categories of mythological mind. They represent the time-space of mass culture mythological narrative. Thus, the mythologeme of Universe has an existential meaning of integration of mass culture heterotopic picture of the world in present implying intercommunication with past and future and appears as an Object within narrative. Similarly to the archaic world picture in which the Universe loci used to intercommunicate via World Tree, the uniting mythological principal in the contemporary mass culture is a symbol of a window connecting, time and spaces, cultures, extraterrestrial worlds, and different types of everyday reality, i.e. physical and cyber reality, empirical and spiritual reality.

The mythologeme of Catastrophe unlike its archaic counterpart – the mythologeme of Flood – relates to future and does not describe past events. It works as a transformation point from existential fear of unpredictable future into calm and reassurance. It relates to the cosmogonic topic as well as it plays for preservation of the universe model embodied in the image of community (whole of the mankind). It plays role of an Adversary within narrative. It is also

tightly intertwined with Christian discourse and more precise with eschatological ontology. In mass culture the role of an Antichrist (as an evident marker of the End of the World narrative) is ascribed to leaders of society or to societies themselves, which are the most odious.

The mythologeme of Golden Age alludes to the universal idea of Eutopia (Dreamland) situated in a forever bygone era (always in the past) that in mass culture is associated with the subject of childhood. It can appear as an Object or an Adversary within narrative. Thus, three of those mythologemes constitute an integral triad of time and space of the world (past-present-future) and reflect upon human existential quest for integral explanation of the world, nostalgia for the past and fears towards the future.

The mythologeme of Mother Nature relates to the existential search for inner authenticity and identity. Despite the feminist turn in contemporary mass culture discourse, this mythologeme unveils itself through the key opposition between culture (technology)/nature. It can take a form of an implicit idea represented by local traditional symbols, images, characters within general mass culture discourse, or this mythologeme can also take shape of an actant (Adjutant or Adversary) within narrative .

Meanwhile Greimasian actantial model shows relations between actants within either fictional/reflected narrative or factual reality, it is remarkable that mythological mind unites them. In some cases (when Subject is a real person) it might appear that a real person acts together (being helped or opposed) with mythologeme as an Adjutant (Fate or Mother Nature mythologeme, for example).

The mytheme of Transformation, or Miracle, and the mytheme of Backtracking, are universal ontological mythemes exhibiting ideas about natural phenomena in culture and revealing them in mass culture texts. It is possible to examine them via WCUB, which demonstrates an inner process of negotiation and overcoming of life-death existential bases as discrete constituents of the mythemes. The mytheme of Transformation lays itself bare as an inner schema of mythological narrative about miracle, the mytheme of Backtracking reveals itself as a schema of “unwrapping the bygone past” and returning to mastered time and space and thereby constituting the center of semiosphere for a subject.

The list of described mythologemes and mythemes is by no means exhaustive. Also, there arises a question about the possible amount of universal mythemes including the Universal Categories of Ultimate Bases, which is an important matter to be investigated in future research.

To conclude, I believe that the exploration of the mythologemes and mythemes as semiotic markers of myth can assist in discovering the secrets of the popularity of well-known and widespread narratives within mass culture. In the Chapter III, I will demonstrate some of the examples of the mythemes and mythologemes in circulation within mass cultural discourse.

### III. CASE STUDIES

#### 1. ADHERENCE OF ARCHAIC AND CONTEMPORARY MYTHOLOGY BY EXAMPLE OF UKRAINIAN MASS CULTURE. CASE OF DARTH VADER

The next section shows how mythemes and mythologemes reveal themselves in mass culture saturating Ukrainian political discourse that I observed through several election campaigns in Ukraine of 2014–2015<sup>72</sup>, both on Ukrainian television and through different Internet sources of mass media<sup>73</sup>. Also this case shows a successful usage of the trickster's image, giving a fruitful precedent for a multifaceted semiotic analysis. Firstly, I will make short overview of “Star Wars” as a complete independent text of culture, then I will introduce a political context, providing examples afterwards.

##### 1.1 Introduction: “Star Wars” as text and transmedial world<sup>74</sup>

“Star Wars” has developed from a movie into an “Expanded Universe”, as it has been aptly named by the toy manufacturer Kenner and also the producer of the popular “Star Wars” figures. “Star Wars” has taken a variety of forms of existence in contemporary mass culture, transmitting the same world of meanings and mythology by way of different types of materials and practices, such as books, games, toys, video and computer games, attractions, parodies, etc. Such an integral system, or a world of meanings, can be approached within several different theoretical frameworks. Within mass culture studies (Scheid and Ortolí 2015; Leguil 2015) “Star Wars” is regarded as a contemporary *mythological system*. The same phenomenon could also be named as a social practice within the framework of consumer culture studies (Buckingham and Sefton-Green 2003). From a cultural semiotic point of view, “Star Wars” could be analysed as a text (Zaporozhtseva 2018: 261). J.Lotman has argued that contemporary treatment of an object as a text is based on the overlapping of several components; the “intercrossing of author's and audience's points of view”, and “the peculiar structural characteristics that could be conceived as signals of the text” (Lotman 2000a[1992]: 103). Lotman also emphasizes that in the authorial perspective a text arises as an infinite process, while at the same

---

<sup>72</sup> Presidential elections on the 25th of May, 2014; Mayoral elections Parliamentary elections on the 26th of October, 2014; Local elections on the 25th of October 2015.

<sup>73</sup> It is necessary to add that during this campaign the 29 political parties were competing to break into parliament. There were traditional political forces among them, one of the totally new political forces there was in particular the Internet party of Ukraine.

<sup>74</sup> This case I partly explored in the research paper “Darth Vader in Ukraine: On the boundary between reality and mythology” (Zaporozhtseva 2018).

time it is publicly perceived as a finished object (ibid., 103). There are different examples of texts that have been completed due to the increasing impact of the Web 2.0 turn and as a result of a great deal of new opportunities for prosumers. As a matter of fact, the notion of prosumers, coined by Alvin Toffler in the book “The Third Wave” (1980), aptly reflects the interaction between the author and the audience apropos media texts. “Star Wars” is one of the most well-known media franchises that has become a transmedial text. One the one hand, “Star Wars” as a primary object was released as a movie in 1977 and became a text of contemporary mass culture functioning as an integral sign, where the perspectives of authors [infinite process] and audience [finished object] converge. On the other hand, this text constitutes an entire system of signs which can acquire new transmedial forms, and, in turn, interact with the whole semiosphere of culture.

J.Lotman specifies that a text can be represented by the entire work, as well as by its parts; however, even compositional groups, genre, and finally literature as a whole can be treated as a text (ibid., 102). In this case, the boundaries of such texts currently remain a relevant issue for discussion. Kirby argues that the digimodernistic text in the Web 2.0 era has fluid boundaries (2009). Nevertheless, the real issue is as to how far the fluid boundaries of such texts might spread and where fiction influences or encroaches upon reality, especially when it comes to the realm of politics. Apparently, the notion of a transmedial world (TMW), coined by Klastrup and Tosca within media semiotics studies, can help to clarify this issue. Reflecting on the materiality of those types of texts and considering “Star Wars” as an integral system, Klastrup and Tosca describe it as a TMW and explicate this issue in the following manner:

Transmedial worlds are abstract content systems from which a repertoire of fictional stories and characters can be actualized or derived across a variety of media forms. What characterises a transmedial world is that audience and designers share a mental image of the “worldness” (a number of distinguishing features of its universe). The idea of a specific world’s worldness mostly originates from the first version of the world presented, but can be elaborated and changed over time. Quite often the world has a cult (fan) following across media as well. (Klastrup, Tosca 2004: 409)

In accordance with this approach, “Star Wars”, being primarily a movie turned into computer games and other varieties of popular entertainment, can be perceived as a TMW.

However, what if a TMW from the entertainment and commercial discourse gets involved in politics? As it happens, there is another genre recently occupied by the “Star Wars” TMW: political masquerade. Strangely enough, Darth Vader appeared as a candidate during Ukrainian parliamentary and presidential election campaigns, participating in the political life of the state since 2012 and manifesting himself as a masquerade type of politician. Without a doubt, such a creative technique has influenced Ukrainian political discourse.

Still, it remains ambiguous whether politician Darth Vader just borrows the well-known image to shock the grassroots or challenge the demarcation lines between mockery and seriousness in political life with a view to break into mainstream politics. In any case, it is obvious that he creates a new text about himself on the cutoff point between the mythological world and reality. I assume that insights about cultural impact of this issue require enhancement of the political studies framework with a broader semiotic outlook.

More particularly, I have specified two key questions that could be clarified through the semiotic perspective in order to understand the contextual dynamics of the issue. Thus, I will make an attempt to find answers to the following questions: a) How does the image of politician Darth Vader interact with reality remediating the images of the TMW of “Star Wars”; and b) How does Darth Vader resemiotize other texts and is resemiotized by them within the semiosphere of Ukrainian culture?

Remediation in the present paper is conceptually based upon the theoretical framework of Bolter and Grusin, who assert that all mediation is remediation (2000: 55):

We are not claiming this as an a priori truth, but rather arguing that at this extended historical moment, all current media function as remediators and that remediation offers us a means of interpreting the work of earlier media as well. Our culture conceives of each medium or constellation of media as it responds to, redeploys, competes with, and reforms other media.

I suppose that additional concepts for this definition could be re-actualization and retranslation, which might reflect related mechanisms of circulation of meanings through different forms of media. Bolter and Grusin separate three dimensions of remediation, namely, the inseparability of mediation and reality (1), the mediation of mediation (2), and reform of reality (3) (ibid, 55–56). I will further demonstrate them by examples in the section 2. After the qualitative analysis of the video in the section 4, I will focus on another important aspect of resemiotization that occurs with regard to those issues. I will apply here the notion of resemiotization suggested by Iedema, who approaches this matter by means of concepts of shifting the borders and re-contextualization, the focus of resemiotization is on matter of shifting “meanings across semiotic modes” (Iedema 2003: 25).

## 1.2 Darth Vader the politician in Ukrainian political context

To begin with, I would like to briefly introduce the context of the issue at hand. As a matter of fact, Ukrainian Darth Vader is none other than Viktor Alexeyevich Shevchenko, who changed his passport name to the name of the character from the cinematic sci-fi saga by George Lucas. As a political figure, Darth Alexeyevich Vader first appeared in public in 2012 while participating in different local political events and activities in Odessa. As an assistant to the Head of the Internet Party of Ukraine, Darth Vader became a media leader and media representative for the party. He first participated in a political campaign during the snap elections of the President of Ukraine, and then he tried to become the mayor of Kyiv and Odessa simultaneously (spring of 2014). Later, the Internet Party led by the media persona Darth Vader, participated in the off-year elections of the Parliament of Ukraine (autumn of 2014). All those attempts were unsuccessful. Indeed, in September 2015 the party was registered under a new name, “Coalition of Darth Vader”, and it made yet another attempt to break into the Odessa City Council and get the mayoral position for Darth Alexeyevich Vader in October 2015. Eventually, during the last campaign, there emerged as many as 44 Darth Vaders registered in Odessa as candidates aiming to become the deputies of the City Council. Notably, one of the representatives of the Coalition by the name of Emperor Palpatine swept a constituency (54, 4%) and became a deputy of Odessa City Council.

Defining “Star Wars” as a TMW, Klastrup and Tosca describe several criteria for the *worldness* of any TMW. They argue that there are at least three constituents: *mythos*, *ethos*, and *topos*. Thus, the preservation of the worldness of any TMW depends on “the designers’ ability to identify and implement the core elements of the ur-world without betraying its topos, ethos and mythos” (Klastrup, Tosca 2004).

In my opinion, in the present case the Internet Party of Ukraine has succeeded in preserving the “Star Wars” worldness. Firstly, the mythos of this particular TMW was thoroughly maintained by the distinct appearances during public events of the Internet Party in “Star Wars” costumes, as well as by the changed names of Vader and his assistants (the first five candidates from Internet party of Ukraine also acquired new passport names such as Emperor Palpatine, Stepan Chewbacca, Padme Amidala, and Master Yoda (Fig. 13).



**Figure 13.** Internet-party of Ukraine. Going in to parliament, we are greeting you<sup>75</sup>.

Moreover, the biography of the politician Darth Vader presented at his official web-page contains “real” facts of his life intertwined with the “Star Wars” legend: “I was born in Kyiv in family of simple toilers. [...]During ballroom dances I met Amidalova Julianna Ilinichna who was a head of military camp canteen [...] We gave birth to our son Luke [...] I became a founder of a LLC ‘Star of Death.’”

In addition, the rhetoric of their election pledges was reduced to the circle of meanings connected with the “Star Wars” TMW. For example, Vader promised to enhance the strength of the Ukrainian army via building a combat orbital space station “Star of Death” and assured to recognize the Sith language as the second state language of Ukraine. As we can see, the main mythos of the TMW was extended in this manner to the political reality of Ukraine and produced the rumble about Darth Vader, who “had landed” in Ukraine and had become a political persona.

Secondly, this political force also made an attempt to preserve the ethos of “Star Wars.” The Internet Party has incorporated some “Star Wars” ideas into their political messages by means of political billboarding., e.g.: “While the bright are promising, the dark are doing” (Fig. 14), repeating it in their speeches and public appearances. Another billboard motto is “War – no, peace – yes”

<sup>75</sup> Note on figures: All images were collected by the author from public spaces in Kiev and Odessa during elections’ political advertising campaigns of Internet Party of Ukraine in 2014–2015.



(Fig. 15) alluding both to the title of the TMW and the political situation in the East Ukraine.



**Figure 14.** Internet-party of Ukraine. “While the bright are promising, the dark are doing” Darth Vader is a candidate for the mayor of Odessa position”.



**Figure 15.** War – no! Peace – yes! Internet Party of Ukraine. Darth Vader.

Thirdly, the next example expressing Vader's appeal to make a choice is connected both with the ethos and the topos of "Star Wars" and alludes also to the concept of the Galactic Empire that is important for the "Star Wars" mythos. These party ads on billboards read: "We will revive the Empire" and "Don't choose between EU and CU; Intergalactic Empire led by Darth Vader." The accuracy is not the strongest in this case, as the leader of Galactic Empire in the TMW of "Star Wars" was Emperor Palpatine rather than Darth Vader, but the main point of the message refers to the issue of the geopolitical deadlock in Ukraine. Since Ukraine had no choice but to join either the European Union or Customs Union, Vader offers an alternative – The New Order alternatively known as the Galactic Empire.

Another sign, maintaining the "physical attendance" of the topos of this TMW, is the Imperial March performed via amplified speakers during all public activities of Darth Vader. Being a marker of the "Star Wars" brand, it supports the main mythos of a politician who landed from another universe to Ukraine and conveys their topos to the real spaces through symbols of Vader's world. The universe of Ukraine is represented here by integration Ukrainian symbols like salo (Fig. 16) and cultural enclosure (Fig. 17).



**Figure 16.** Salo for the kievans! Darth Vader is a candidate for the position of mayor of Kyiv.



**Figure 17.** “Kyivan women are for kyivan men!”Kyivan men are for kyivan women! Darth Vader is a candidate for the position of mayor of Kyiv.

Therefore, the Internet Party of Ukraine not only translates the TMW of “Star Wars” through the key symbols, maintaining the mythos, ethos and topos of this TMW, but also extends it onto Ukrainian political reality. Thus, the next question arises: how it is performed through the materiality of text?

### **1.3 Remediation of the traditional mythology in Vader’s political advertisement**

Being a transmedial world, this text is performed through different types of materiality, in other words, different types of media. I assume that the present case of Vader as a politician includes all three dimensions of remediation suggested by Bolter and Grusin. In the previous section, I gave examples of the attempts to achieve the inseparability of reality and mediation by the designers of the political party. To the same extent, the translation of the TMW into the political image can be treated as the mediation of a mediation since the TMW of “Star Wars” is also an integral medium itself, transmitting contemporary mythology (Leguil 2015). Nevertheless, in what follows, I would like to explore the remediation of several traditional symbols as mediums themselves and remediation as a reform of reality.

I have scrutinized Internet advertising (pre-rolls) of the Internet Party of Ukraine released during the parliament campaign in Autumn of 2014. The most professional and complete political ads, from my point of view, were launched during that campaign. The three spots (“About Democracy; “Vader Removes A Mask”; “Darth Vader And Salo”) might be treated both as a triptych and separate spots full of insights and allusions to ancient Slavic mythology, con-

temporary “Star Wars” mythology, and Ukrainian traditional cultural images (Zaporozhtseva 2018: 268). Darth Vader appears in those three spots in the images as a peasant-seeder, a cossack and a kobzar, reciprocally remediating traditional Ukrainian images by his appearance and remediating the “Star Wars” character, putting him into a totally new context. I will demonstrate the process of remediation by the example of the spot “Darth Vader And Salo.”

### 1.3.1 Analyzing “Drawing Force Of Democracy”<sup>76</sup>

*The spot storyline (duration 0’45’’).* There is uncultivated land we can see as background of the shot. Such a landscape is intrinsic for major territory of Ukraine. Darth Vader appears at the foreground plowing soil with the quintessentially traditional Ukrainian farming instrument – the plough. However, instead of a horse or an ox pulling the plough, we see a space shuttle towing the weight. Golden stalks of wheat pierce the ground from under Vader’s feet. A man’s voice narrates a printed text: “Darth Vader will pull Ukraine out the gulf”. A woman’s voice continues: “Darth Vader is a candidate to a Deputy of the Parliament from Internet Party of Ukraine”.

*Denotation.* The main denotative message constitutes humoristic effect. Darth Vader has just landed from space and appears here as a Seeder who is helped by innovative draught force.

*Connotation.* Music and sound accompaniment. From my point of view the several musemes are crucially important in this spot, as they also contribute to mythological level of the message. I regard here museme bearing in mind its continual origin as it was stated by Tagg,

music’s signifiers (musemes) cannot logically exist unless related to their signifieds and those signifieds cannot be examined without some kind of empirical underpinning, not just in terms of musical syntax but also, and more urgently, in terms of paramusical phenomena demonstrably and consistently linked, in a given cultural context, to the musical structures under discussion (Tagg 2004: 4).

Sounds of wind whistling and two thumpers constitute a background for Beethoven’s “Egmont” Overture at the beginning of the spot (initial fanfares). Next, the fog horn appears three times with the same rhythm substituting thumpers. Each sound here can be regarded as a museme and may allude to several connotations. Wind usually symbolizes emptiness, abandonment, absence of humanity, sadness. The thumper correlates with Darth Vader’s marching. Once the fog horn appears, it stuns the onlooker and inserts into the narrative a museme that can be treated, apparently, as technological principal or cosmic intervention.

---

<sup>76</sup> Official Youtube channel of Internet Party of Ukraine. Accessed 29.08.2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTtTD1nyIP8>

*Visual markers.* The main colors of this space provide an association most obviously characterizing two main protagonists in this video, drawing sharp distinctions between the two of them. At first glance, it may seem that the two protagonists are Darth Vader wearing black, who deals with a black plough and the black shuttle assisting him, and Ukraine, “wearing” the colorful landscape with a peaceful blue sky and green grassy land. As Colette aptly mentions following Ricoeur’s approach (1985), “by engaging directly with the text as both narrator and character, we experience the narrative phenomenologically. As we become part of the story being told, the story becomes our own” (Colette 2012: 187). From this point of view I may presume that the two main protagonists are Darth Vader and a spectator, who is involved with this narrative on a connotative level through the representation of Ukrainian land.

What semantical axes may be found within this small spot? Masculine vs. Feminine. As I introduced this idea in its inception, along the tradition of Western culture heritage the strong mythological associations with a feminine and masculine principles in narratives about nature have surfaced. Delving deeper into this argument, I may recall that this idea derived even from Ancient storylines and ultimately from the Fall narrative (Genesis 3:1–7). As Colette proves (Colette 2012), this storyline establishes a principle of understanding Eve and the Garden of Eden as an integral whole being translated and mediated to the Western culture history by a collection of plots and stories, especially in popular culture.

This idea is especially relevant for the contemporary Ukrainian context. Taking into consideration the above mentioned opposites, we may find semantic motion vector to develop as following, cultivation [qualitative transformation] of primeval, wild, and vital feminine ground by technologically progressive [cultural] masculine principle.

Another layer of this text can be analyzed taking into account four universal worldview codes introduced by Kyrylyuk (2008:48),

there are four basic worldview codes that are socialized basic vital functions of life maintenance transformed into systems of culture, they are alimentary code (nutritive function), erotic code (reproduction), aggressive code (violence and defence), informative (transmission of experience)<sup>77</sup>.

These codes saturate cultural objects, thereby becoming narratives. At least two worldview codes, aggressive and erotic ones appear in this text.

Aggressive worldview code reveals through intrinsic logic of the plot, where domination vs. oppression binary opposition appears from the narrative of a storyline. Several visual markers of the clip support this code making Vader to appear more meaningful, namely the angle of the shot itself let Vader towering, with his dominative black figure, over a landscape and horizon line which is alluding to the duo-colored Ukrainian flag. Another markers are steadily

---

<sup>77</sup> Translation mine – L.Z.

moving spectator-bound steps, the dangerous approach of a wheel, and last but not least the incisor of a plough getting its teeth into the ground in the viewer's direction. Secondly, the aggressive code emerges here with an image of the unknown, as in every case Darth Vader is an outsider of this culture and traditional landscape. The semantic axis of outsider vs. insider can be captured by means of colors and special attributes of Vader's character. In Ukraine, as well as with all Slavs, black is traditionally associated with death and the nether world; this strategy derived from basic archaic mythological ideas that considered outsiders as aliens, who are unfamiliar and represent unmastered, chaotic space personifying enemies and evil. This idea became especially strong in Christian cultures with regard to apocalyptic associations, although that is more deeply rooted in ancient traditions. For instance, the Grim Reaper image always depicted in Western cultural tradition wearing his traditional black cloak with a hood covering face and a scythe.

Moreover, the motif of ground and cultivating it with sharp attributes regarding Slavic mythology was associating with a chthonic creature Volos (Veles), who is considered to be an inhabitant of netherworld (underworld) and an antagonist of the thunderer, Perun. In addition, Volos (Veles) was the strongest trickster in Slavic mythology, later being associated with the devil in Christian times.

Another, the erotic code of this axis is apparent. Except for its presupposition as dialectical principle of interaction between these two main highlighted principles, this code further represented by the idea of cultivation connected with a motif of fecundity and insemination. Inasmuch as Vader appears here in dark ominous clothing, the most relevant connotation here is more connected to his figure embodies more of an abuser than a lover. In addition, it should be taken into account that a character, such as Darth Vader himself, as the protagonist of contemporary narrative is considered as a rather negative force.

All of the attributes particular to the Grim Reaper, such as the black cloak, the helmet instead hood, make Vader's outlook seem non-human (literally unanimated) like contemporary Volos, whose strongest quality was non-human appearance. The human/non-human opposition appears also as a result of other oppositions appearing in the text, such as nature vs. culture, female vs. male. Because we derived from nature, Nature mythologeme is native for everybody. Colette aptly mentions, in referring to this point, "all people, male and female, know their knowledge and their bodies are 'nature'" (Colette 2012:40). This idea also served a basis for Floch's semiotic study of naked (nu) and covered (paré) representation of body as a nature vs. culture opposition (Floch 1985: 32–33). At the same time an idea of covering nature is an idea of its transformation into culture that itself derives from the Fall mythologeme for European culture among others.

The analyzed spot demonstrates naked landscape (which is not realistic countryside for Ukraine and again refers to mythological topos) and a totally

covered Vader who does not demonstrate any visual symptoms of natural being, so even his movements are artificial and robotically technologic.

Taking into consideration the last words of the video and Vader's technological appearance, another axis forms as the dichotomy between Innovation and Tradition. This dichotomy reveals itself from images as well. If to consider an axis of movement within a spot from the left to right, from the bottom upwards, then the cosmic shuttle appears suddenly in the upper right corner as an innovative solution. The antagonism between innovation and tradition can also allude to the idea of an alien's intervention of Native Land, but nevertheless, alludes back to the initial semantic axis – Technology (Culture) vs. Nature.

Discrete visual units of the vide construct additional connotations by means of oppositions, as follows: monochrome vs. polychrome, naked vs. covered, human vs. non-human, innovation vs. tradition, and domination vs. oppression. All they allude to the very basic semantic axis of male vs. female, cultural-technological vs. natural, deriving from within this narrative. Except the literal denotative message, we can notice latent aggression in this message developed by markers of aggressive code embedded within. Perhaps the main connotative idea here is about the contrast between the uncultured voter and dominant candidate who would educate the former by means of innovativeness and technology. In this narrative, Darth Vader represents a strong masculine principle; at the same time a voter-spectator is disposed as a feminine, soft but grateful ground that is naked and won't resist her/his oppression and rape.

### 1.3.2 Analyzing "The Mask Is Dropped"<sup>78</sup>

*The spot storyline (duration (0'48')).* Darth Vader appears in fullback position in shot. Carrying his lightsaber, he is walking along a Ukrainian field with his horse, moving away from spectator; he is holding leading reins of the horse; then Vader sticks his lightsaber into the earth, picks up a handful of soil, and contemplates it. Kneeling, he removes his helmet uncovering herein the collar of his "vyshyvanka" (Ukrainian national shirt) and his Ukrainian cossack haircut: bald-shaved head with an "chub", or "oseledets" (crest). His physical attributes say, „I am Ukrainian. That is my land“.

*Denotation.* As in the first spot, a humour reappears as an important theme that works in tandem with shock. Darth Vader is walking through Ukrainian land leading his horse by its reins<sup>79</sup>. As Vader removes his helmet, Vader appears to not as Anakin Skywalker but as a true Ukrainian cossack, or Skywalker who became a cossack. In other words, he reveals an underlying truly Ukrainian soul. The voice behind the scenes supports this idea declaring, "I am Ukrainian. That is my land".

---

<sup>78</sup> Official Youtube channel of Internet Party of Ukraine. Accessed 29.08.2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4wVqDf1xks>

<sup>79</sup> A horse was the traditional means of transportation for Ukrainian Cossacks in pre-modern times.

*Connotation.* Music and sounds. One can hear the blowing of the wind, the sniffing of the horse, some sounds of synthetic simmering (at the moment of sticking the saber into the ground), and light birdsongs in this spot. The moment Vader removes his helmet, we can hear several arpeggio chords used in preparation for a performance featuring a national Ukrainian instrument – the kobza.. This last museme attaches the whole message to Ukrainian national context.

*Visual markers.* As in the first spot there are two protagonists here. The first one is Darth Vader with a horse that acts primarily a supplementary role in the scene. The second one is an abandoned land without another living soul, apparently naked as it was in the first spot. The special editing applied to this video, in order to create such empty landscape in a shot, is truly remarkable. As previously mentioned, even the wildest steppe in Ukraine is always covered by rare trees or bushes so the message provides an idea of emptiness and abandonment. Notwithstanding, the museme of singing birds reminds us about trees, subconsciously understanding that it is an implicit, but demolished, garden reminiscent only of it or its echo.

Darth Vader's appearance in this spot (with full-back position), against a background of the horizon, reminds the spectator of a stereotypical final sequence of an action movie, in which some hero is escaping in the end of a production. His posture provides sort of grief associated with "farewell". The removing of his helmet can be interpreted as denudation of the soul and a demonstration of human nature under a cloak.

Nevertheless, four plastic signs may belong to another code, possibly alluding to traditional funeral code in a Ukrainian cultural context. The gesture of picking up some dirt is common for funeral rites among Slavs, when one throws a handful of dirt on top of a cover of hearse. Moreover, in such cases men traditionally remove their head-dress, holding them in the left hand; cossacks used to take away or pierce their swords into the ground because they had to free their right hand for the sign of cross. Even Darth Vader's kneeling posture says that evidently he is bidding farewell to somebody who died, but there is nobody here in this case. Apparently, the theme of absence is reflected from the lack of people in the shot. Is it the land with whom Vader is paying respect? In accordance with these signs, it is "farewell" but most probably a funeral farewell paying last respects. In this way, a strong connotation of death emerges, the same as in the first spot. However, if in the first spot death connotation was evoked by the appearance of the alien, in this spot it is evoked by his gestures.

The next connotation that can be found within this message is the Revelation image; at least the black horse with a rider alludes to this association. And indeed the soil without any plants or grass, provokes very sorrow associations with barbarism. Although the soil has been plowed in the shot, Vader is trampling it, either feeling no responsibility on agricultural occupation or there is nobody alive for whom it can be of service. In this framework, the utterance



“this is my land” sounds, to a spectator, more as an aggressive appeal of power – the act of capturing the land.

Therefore, as in the first video, the concept of a dichotomy between the two main protagonists reveals itself, but, unlike the first video, “The Mask Is Dropped”, the spot more strongly mediates a mythologeme of Death dealing with nature in a thanatical respect. Additional connotations here are grief, emptiness, suspicion, domination vs. oppression, masculinity vs. femininity, and alien vs. native.

### 1.3.3 Analyzing “Darth Vader And Salo”<sup>80</sup>

*The spot storyline (duration 0’50’’).* Vader is lounging under the apple tree and strumming acoustic Imperial march on a traditional Ukrainian music instrument, the bandura. While he is playing, everything around is breaking down and blossoming. At the close of the spot, a male voice says in Ukrainian: “We don’t let [them] eat our salo.” After that a female voice announces Darth Vader as a candidate from the Internet Party of Ukraine.

*Denotation.* The main denotative message constitutes humoristic effect. Darth Vader as a fictional character is playing Imperial march sitting under an apple tree somewhere in Ukraine and addresses to real citizens of Ukraine a political message as a presidential candidate.

*Connotation.* I believe that at least three images could be regarded as reconsidered ones in this spot: kobzar, Apple Tree, and salo.

*Kobzar.* The image of kobzar is presented here by the figure of Vader playing a bandura while seated. Indirectly, the context of the spot induces this insight: an apple tree, Ukrainian field and a horse. Generally speaking, the kobzar is a symbolic figure for Ukrainian culture. Kobzars were traditionally itinerants, singing with an accompaniment of their kobza or bandura. They were very faithful and religious people. For this very reason, they would sing epic, moralistic and spiritual songs related to history, life, religion and God in order to enlighten the folk.

In the first instance, Darth Vader has remediated this image by his apparel, a space costume with a helmet replacing a kobzar’s traditional dress, and in the second instance by the song itself, which is “Imperial March.” Thus the association of Vader with such unpredictable imagery is abrupt and the key result provides a comic effect achieved by turning kobzar into an image of the “Star Wars” character.

The second remediation is evidently manifested when the last utterance of the spot is announced. The meaning of this utterance is vague; nevertheless, one can understand that this person, Vader, is not only a kobzar but rather a political persona. What is important is that the remediated image, reverberating from the

---

<sup>80</sup> Official Youtube channel of Internet Party of Ukraine. Accessed 29.08.2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2JwAHhm6F8>

context, refers to Vader and imbues him with new meanings. Consequently, Vader acquires another strong connotation, which obviously is conveyed unexpectedly and irrespective of the primary intention of the designers.

*Apple Tree and Serpent.* The apple tree image plays an ambivalent role in this case. Being a part of traditional Ukrainian garden, it is at the same time an universal image. In European culture, the apple tree is an allusion to The Garden of Eden, as Colette proves, among others (Colette 2012). In Ukrainian traditional cultural context, it possesses also a specific mystical connotation. The apple tree was treated as a peculiar topos for burying unbaptized infants as a specific marginal group. Thus, the apple tree is a specific symbol of marginal territory.

The place under the apple tree used to be occupied with infernal characters. In Eden it was the serpent seducer, who also played a role of a trickster and chthonic creature. For Ukrainian local tradition there was also a serpent-like chthonic deity, a trickster figure named Volos. Volos was a pagan deity of fertility possessing an ugly inhuman appearance. Moreover, the color of Volos was black. Now, from the “Star Wars” side, Darth Vader within his world is also an embodiment of the marginal, the uncanny

[...] the embodiment of the big bad bully [...] Darth Vader is the embodiment of something else. It is a man without a face, whose presence is indicated, above all, by a noisy, regular breathing, which, by itself, is worrying. It is a powerful breath which evokes a presence of which we are unable to grasp its intentions. All depends on this omnipresent respiration emanating from a being without a face. (Leguil 2015: 37)

As the apple tree is a marginal space, the figure sitting by the tree cannot be a human persona, but must be either a holy or demonic one if regarded from mytho-symbolic perspective – becoming evident through other signs appearing in this and other spots. As one might observe, everything in this spot is breaking down and blossoming during Vader’s song. In our opinion, this context attributes Vader the meaning of Volos.

There is yet another crucial marker, which indicates that the kobzar in the spot is not an authentic one and therefore cannot be treated as a holy person, but rather a fake, or imitation of him, viz. that Darth Vader is playing the instrument without singing. Voice in Ukrainian (as well as in European) culture is considered to be an important human (unlike demonic) attribute ultimately derived from the Angels’ voices praising the God. Human beings, who were tongueless, were perceived as non-human beings, as “aliens” in traditional culture (Agapkina 2002: 303–304). They were treated as marginal creatures from the frontier between the worlds, appealing to fear and hate of their surroundings. For this reason, Vader’s bandura playing associates him with a demon (without voice and face that is also a gift from the God as His resemblance) and the blossoming nature provokes insights about the demonic origin of this wealth. In other words, Vader’s appearance here could be

ultimately reduced to the serpent seducer image as an embodiment of the evil under the apple tree. Therefore, Darth Vader being himself from “the dark side” and wearing a dark costume, further remediates other infernal images of the netherworld that might prove and enforce his darkness.

*Salo.* Salo is cured pork fat and it is a symbol of wealth, since pork itself is a symbol of prosperity in Ukraine. There are other symbols of wealth typical to Ukrainian culture and, for example, wheat or bread can be listed among them. However, whereas wheat or bread is a common symbol for many cultures (especially Slavic agrarian cultures) salo is particularly reserved for Ukrainian representation in its stereotypes and unlike other Eastern Slavic cultures. Salo is a symbol of peculiar Ukrainian wealth.

Wealth plays a central role in the message I am analyzing here. Visual representation of wealth is accomplished by way of blossoming nature, but also by a verbal representation which appears in the end of the spot in the utterance of the non-diegetic voice: “We don’t let [them] eat our salo.” At the same time, the construction of the utterance “we don’t let [them] eat our salo” provides a primary mythological separation We/They that is remediated by Vader. Darth Vader, who is an enigma himself being unknown, alien or ultimately even an infernal image, should belong to the side of “they”: i.e. among those who belong to the chaotic, unknown, un-cosmic, un-mastered space. But Vader’s claim [alien] to defend salo [wealth of Ukraine] from [them] remediates his figure to the figure of an insider within the cosmos of the Ukrainian semiosphere and incorporates his image into the local Ukrainian space. Also, this message correlates with several other Vader’s billboard ads, such as “Salo for the Kievans” (Fig. 16) and “Kyivan men are for kyivan women! Kyivan women are for kyivan men!” (Fig. 17) translating the same message of defending the inner wealth for the insiders of the culture. Although the meaning of the message is vague, I can venture to speculate that among other it refers to the Crimea issue being a highly relevant matter for Ukraine nowadays, by evoking highly topical issue of the inner/outer space of the political and cultural semiosphere.

Therefore, in my opinion, here we could find an example of the remediation of several traditional symbols as mediums of integral texts by a new sign of Darth Vader, who is a representative of his own TMW (Zaporozhtseva 2017: 272). Moreover, a reform of reality here also emerges as a consequence of inseparability of mediation and reality (in case of the last proclamation in the spot).

At the same time, the remediation through the meanings of the TMW of “Star Wars” demonstrates how the emerging codes interact with residual codes incorporated in traditional texts of culture within the whole semiosphere of the Ukrainian spectator.

Nevertheless, another problem I encountered during the analysis of this spot that is not entirely explained by the concept or remediation is the ambivalence of acquiring meanings by Vader. He remediates traditional images by a new form of the character and, translating it through virtual materiality, Vader also acquires new meanings by the context. First and foremost, he becomes a

representative of the trickster image in a new form. In my opinion, the concept of resemiotization could be an appropriate one to explain this process.

#### **1.4 Vader and resemiotization of collective memory**

In the previous section I described a case related mostly to the issue of remediation of TMW images by real-life events and persons, as well as converse remediation of reality by TMW mosaics and splicing them all together into a virtual reality. I suppose that the concept of remediation is inherently connected with resemiotization, which describes the same process but focuses upon innate processes of meaning and consequences of remediation (Zaporozhtseva 2018: 272–275). In the previous example, I made an attempt to demonstrate that remediation had the consequence of changing the idea of the new medium [Darth Vader] as long as the new context influenced him and vice versa. It would appear, then, that those two processes are related.

Perhaps the principle of this phenomenon lies in the origin of mass media, allowing one to juxtapose phenomena of different layers within one topos; in one virtual world that the spectator eventually acquires. As Bolter and Grusin claim, “virtual reality reforms reality by giving us an alternative visual world and insisting on that world as the locus of presence and meaning for us” (2000: 61). Building upon one of J.Lotman’s and Uspensky’s definitions of culture as “non hereditary collective memory” (Lotman and Uspensky 1971: 488), I would like to describe another event in Darth Vader’s political life which demonstrates how collective memory is changed due to the process of resemiotization within Ukrainian culture.

“Leninfall” as a specific movement has become one of the strongest cultural phenomena in Ukraine since the Euromaidan events. It emerged after the wrecking of Lenin’s monument in Kyiv on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, 2013. After the event, many old monuments of Lenin were destroyed and removed all around the country. Moreover, a unique Internet site of this movement emerged, presenting a list of all existing and removed monuments of Lenin.

This movement appeared as a consequence of the youths’ reconsideration of the collective memory of the Soviet past. The process of destruction of monuments in fact is a resemiotization of the space and time [past], removing something from the memory. I will not go deep into the details of this issue, but just briefly note that after the first demolition of the monuments executed by volunteers, a new law on “Denouncement of communist and national-socialist (nazi) totalitarian regimes in Ukraine and prohibition against propaganda of their symbols” was launched in Ukraine on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April, 2015. In accordance with this law, all objects carrying symbols of the communist epoch are forbidden in the territory of Ukraine and are to be removed or destroyed. So the removal of Lenin’s monuments has become a legal requirement of the state.

One of these forgotten monuments was situated in the territory of a factory in Odessa and incidentally survived. In October 2015, this particular Lenin

monument was painted black and reconfigured into a monument of the politician Vader wearing a helmet as his trademark feature. While this activity took place shortly before the elections in local councils, it seemed to be a creative political PR action. Nevertheless, from cultural semiotic point of view it is an example of the resemiotization of collective memory symbols.

It is a well-known fact that the image of Lenin was treated as a key symbol of the Soviet era. His personality was familiar for everyone that grew up in the Soviet reality. Lenin's *body* became an ideological symbol (Yurchak 2015) and was replicated by millions of monuments in the Soviet Union. At the same time, Darth Vader as a character from the TMW of "Star Wars" is one of the most recognisable images in the world since the 1980s while not possessing a real body: he is a TMW fictional personage with a *virtual body*. Darth Alexejevich Vader playing the role of a trickster spliced together both of them: firstly, gave his own *body* to the fictional character, turning him into a politician, and secondly, he gave Lenin's *body* to this hybrid trickster image. By doing so, he remediated his own body as a human being and resemiotized the monument with a new political appearance as to put it to another cultural context.

Moreover, the masquerade effect (as turning things upside down in Bakhtin's viewpoint) was provided by playing around with some rhetorical forms alluding to the Soviet historical context. For example, during the ceremony of unveiling of the monument, Vader promised "free apartments without paying utilities for everybody who requires one" which is an allusion to a well-known communist idea deriving from the slogan "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" popularized by Marx back in 1875 ("Critique of the Gotha Program"). Another famous Vader's promise, which appeared everywhere in his advertising, was "retirement benefit from three years old." Those promises sound absurd in contemporary circumstances and demonstrate Vader's intention to invalidate the Soviet semiosphere by recontextualizing its ideas that usually act as triggers for the Soviet Union nostalgia.

Therefore, Darth Vader has fulfilled "Leninfall" from a semiotic point of view by installing the ideological figure of the Soviet past into another context and, at the same time, has reciprocally politicized the image of Darth Vader, being hitherto primarily a mass-cultural character. For this reason, there are two worlds clashing and encountering each other in this monument: communist one vs. capitalist one, dominative hierarchy vs. democratic masquerade (in Bakhtin's viewpoint), ideology vs. mass culture. Remediating his own political message, or wrapping political advertisement into such a form, Vader positively fulfilled the resemiotization (re-contextualization) of a key symbol of cultural memory.

Another image evoked by Vader's infernal appearance is probably the image of Voland from the novel "Master and Margarita" by Mikhail Bulgakov, beloved and famous for all Ukrainians as Bulgakov was born and lived for a long time in Kyiv. Although Vader in his TMW of "Star Wars" is the second in rank after Emperor Palpatine, in the political [virtual] reality he pretends to be the almighty one. Like Voland, Vader is accompanied by his helpers

performing magic tricks. For example, there is a series of spots about Vader who is “landing” in different cities of Ukraine (Odessa, Zaporozhie, Nikolajev, Lviv, Kharkiv, Dnepropetrovsk), or the magic transformation of Lenin’s monument into a monument of Vader, or the escorting of Vader around the cities in his special automobile with the ominous and surreal Imperial March amplified through speakers, or the impersonation of traditional images through their remediation in virtual reality. It is obvious that all of these tricks are being constructed via and by means of media and exist only in the media as an “alternative visual world” (Bolter, Grusin 2000). This alternative world offers us a kind of unexisting politician from the netherworld without a real home similar to Voland in “Master and Margarita”, who habitually appeared from nowhere and *disappeared* to nowhere, who possessed magic strength and power to restore the justice in circumstances where people felt helpless in front of the hierarchy of the social order of those times.

As an embodiment of demonic origin, Vader has now created a precedent to preserve memory about him by resemiotizing the *body* of one of the main symbols of the whole 20<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly to Voland, who settled in a marginal and infernal apartment at Sadovaja street, Darth Vader’s marginal dwelling place is the media sphere that is beyond reality and unreality and only tends to become reality for those who accept it. As J.Lotman points out, a house for Bulgakov is a medium of safety, cultural harmony and creativity (Lotman 2000[1986]: 320). From this point of view, the political person without a home, or with a home in a marginal place under the apple tree in virtual reality, raises new allusions and ideas for reflection.

## 1.5 Interpretation

In conclusion, the three spots may be treated as a triptych full of insights and allusions to ancient and contemporary mythology. Darth Vader appears in the spots in different images as a peasant-seeder, as a cossack and as a kobzar. From our point of view, the main idea uniting the three spots is revealed upon the main semantic axis of nature vs. culture, or female vs. male, in the most abstract level of categorization. The two main protagonists of this triptych’s narrative are agents of two separate mythological generations: archaic mythology (Nature and Mother Earth) and contemporary mass culture mythology (Darth Vader). Also we can find in the present spots a many allusions laying emphasis on national symbols and mass cultural political Ukrainian motifs and general ideas borrowed mostly from historical and literature studies discourse such as cossacks image, kobzar, salo as wealth symbol, and Ukrainian land as historical utopia.

It seems like all frequent images appearing within several semantical axes could be reduced on a connotative level to several mythologemes and mythemes. The mytheme of transformation is presented here by the seductive strategy of Darth Vader who is calling for magical changes. Ortner argues

(1972: 20) that the idea of culturalizing, as abstract transformation of “raw into cooked” (following Lévi-Straussian strategy (1969:496)), is a feminine principle but in this case it is enforced by Vader’s masculine principle. Even though the function can be a disputable question still the main semantical axis remains the same consequently providing this mytheme.

The most ancient mythological mythologemes of Garden as eutopia, Mother Earth is competing and at the same time supplying with archaic mythologemes of Serpent (Trickster), universal mythologeme of Death and contemporary Technological Eutopia (represented by Darth Vader and Internet Party). Together they produce new powerful connotations and some unpredictable meanings, the most saturated new combinations can be as follows:

In all three spots Nature is passive, enduring, and at the same time Vader is active, he performs acts towards Nature. The strong connotations with Nature as female and Vader who is male are provided. Masculine principle of Vader nevertheless mostly is connected with Death mythologeme; even while erotic code is appearing here, thanatical indicators are ambivalently present.

Moreover, Death and Love, Insider-Outsider position, Seduction and Domination, Horror and Laughter are the angles that provide the image of Vader as a trickster. Although the most predictable outcome of the spots is a humoristic effect, there are a lot of ambiguities that can be interpreted differently. For instance, all present spots are providing a message of Vader as fertilizer, who by different means is plowing the ground, nurturing a fatal tree almost full of Fruits needed for seduction, and, afterwards, lounging under Apple Tree. As a carrier of multidimensional contemporary mythology of “Star Wars”, Darth Vader appearing within Ukrainian reality and traditional mythological narratives turns to become a chthonic trickster figure against a background of a Garden mythologeme, namely, a Serpent-Seducer from the Fall narrative. From the one side the Serpent includes mytheme of transformation. He is, so to say, inviting them to his world of radical changes. However, the idea of such transformation is vague in this narrative taking into consideration its political message. Thus, this message within this mythological hybrid narrative gravitates to the ultimate right-wing’s political idea.

Therefore, the presented spots are an interesting case of mass culture mythological design of the political message. Although, the main direct strategy of the subject remains vague; being a sort of mythological message, the performance in this triptych creates own narrative time which involves a viewer to become a participant of the narrative uniting cosmological (historical) and phenomenological (subjective) time. From this point of view, we might say that Vader’s aggressive dominance directed towards a viewer by idea of innovation, nevertheless, leaves a spectator to encounter at the same moment the sign of emptiness as an open mode for variety of unpredictable treatments.

## 1.6 Findings

Stemming from the definition of text from J.Lotman's perspective, I assume that the textual dimension of the "Star Wars" phenomenon in a macro cultural perspective sheds light upon its interaction with other texts within culture. However, for a deeper analysis of this contemporary text we need an additional tool for understanding its inner logic of organisation as a peculiar system of signs. "Star Wars", therefore, can be analyzed as an integral text in a macro cultural perspective interacting with other texts. For the analysis of its inner logic we should take into account the concept of a transmedial world reflecting the materiality of thresholds within this text. As Ojamaa and Torop argue, "the aspect of transmediality [...] is implicitly included already in J.Lotman's concept of cultural explosion" (Ojamaa and Torop 2015: 64). The present case demonstrates how the cluster of new meanings can emerge due to the overlapping of the TMW and reality.

Dealing with the precise case of political representation of the TMW, I can conclude that the creators and designers of the political figure of Darth Vader have successfully transmitted all necessary symbols and mediums in order to maintain worldness; viz. mythos, ethos and topos of the TMW "Star Wars" and extended it into Ukrainian political life. This feature demonstrates how the intercrossing of authorial intention and audience treatment is embodied within the text.

The image of Darth Vader, as a key figure of TMW "Star Wars" and the central figure of the political party "Coalition of Darth Vader", is remediated by the body of a human being, a citizen of Ukraine, who at the same time remediates himself, acquiring a new name and appearance, resemiotizes political reality, collective memory and builds a new structure of meanings and thereby offering a new hybrid reality for his followers. The three dimensions of remediation here are included (mediation of mediation, inseparability of mediation and reality, and reform of reality). Vader remediates the topos of Ukraine, while at the same time being ambivalently resemiotized by universal and local traditional images acquiring new meanings.

Vader, being a part of a transmedial world himself, creates a new topos in political context, a new practice or an explosion of a new circle of meanings, and at the same time constantly resemiotizes the political figure possessing the qualities of a fictional hero. The threshold of reality and virtual reality, as the overlapping of different texts, also creates a suspended circle of meanings, new questions, and raises unpredictability within the semiosphere of the contemporary Ukrainian spectator.

The outcomes of a qualitative analysis cannot be exhaustive, but at the same time, new interpretations could indeed provide novel insights to the unclear case of Vader-politician, which is important as long as Vader as a politician currently remains a dark-horse candidate unbalancing in a way the already shaky Ukrainian political reality. The presented cultural insight is useful for clarifying why this text or performance attracts the attention of the audience,



what meanings are produced by this text, and what new meanings emerge when it is recontextualized.

Besides this, the Vader's case can be regarded from the marketing perspective. Politician Vader demonstrates an example of borrowing a strong mythological image for building own political brand. Although Dart Alexeevich is a new figure for Ukrainian electorate, he tries to exploit an image of the most familiar figure of contemporary mass culture mythology to reduce a distance between him and citizens.

The present case is on the verge between mass culture, marketing, and politics. In the next section, I will demonstrate a case on the verge of mass culture, marketing and music arts. I will consider an example of using mythologeme in purpose of building music artistic image.

## **2. MYTHOLOGEME OF MOTHER NATURE AS A BRANDING TOOL**

As yet another example of applying mythologeme for re-coding an image of an artist, I would like to present a case<sup>81</sup> where the semiotic analysis was requested for elaborating a brand strategy of a young generic Moscovian artist Manizha (M. hereafter).

M. gained popularity after she had started posting 15-seconds video in Instagram since 2014. At first she made cover versions of famous songs and later she started to publish videos for her own songs. In 2017 she released her first album called "Manuscript", and in 2018 she presented already the second album "ЯІАМ".

After the release of her first album M.'s artistic image remained niche, so the research question was how to re-build her image in order to attract mass audience. That became the main aim of this project: to map out the possibilities as to how the current artistic image might be re-coded in order to increase the popularity of the singer for mass audience while, at the same time, leaving the core values of the artist unchanged. In fact, this project was rather different from the usual cases because the final suggestions were presented mainly as inspirational ideas, not strict recommendations. Thus, the main tasks were 1) to decode the existing visual image of the artist via semiotic analysis and 2) to determine the possibilities for re-coding the image in a way it could constitute a coherent public narrative about the artist, which would then match both with her music and her inner identity.

---

<sup>81</sup> This case is allowed for publication. All materials are cited from open information sources in accordance to Data Policy and Terms Of Use of Instagram and Youtube.

## 2.1 Methodology

The project consisted of two stages. The first stage involved a close analysis of the artist's current visual and vocal image and an analysis of the competitors. The second stage had mainly to do with the exploration of the possibilities for creating a coherent artistic image and formulating certain inspirational tools.

During the first stage of this project, I used the following techniques of analysis:

- visual analysis of media representation (photos, videos of M., her images, costumes, decorations, facial expressions, colors of dressing and her hairstyle) in dynamics from 2015 to 2017;
- musical semiotic analysis: to define the vocal persona of the artist;
- analysis of her lyrics;
- contextual analysis: M.'s collaboration with other brands, her participation in marketing communication (Borzhomi, Martini and others), public interviews, communication with her audience online and offline, last but not the least, comparative analysis of competitive environment in the same genre to dig deeper into wider cultural context and to compare her image in relation to other artists.
- semiotic square: after the first stage of research, I applied a semiotic square technique in order to see how the image of M. corresponds to and fits to the current cultural context.

## 2.2 Description of the first stage

In order to carry out the semiotic analysis, I treated M's. artistic image as an integral text of contemporary culture, which in turn is constituted from separate texts/items. By separate texts I mean all her songs (music and lyrics<sup>82</sup>), artistic visual image on Instagram, interviews, concerts' ambience, as well as the public image of the other musicians working on M's. project.

I analyzed all available content of M. from 2015 to 2017: in other words, everything that could be also available for her target audience. In addition, I also visited a concert of M. on 27th of October in the House of Unions (Moscow).

### 2.2.1 Comparison of visual representation and lyrics in 2015 and 2017

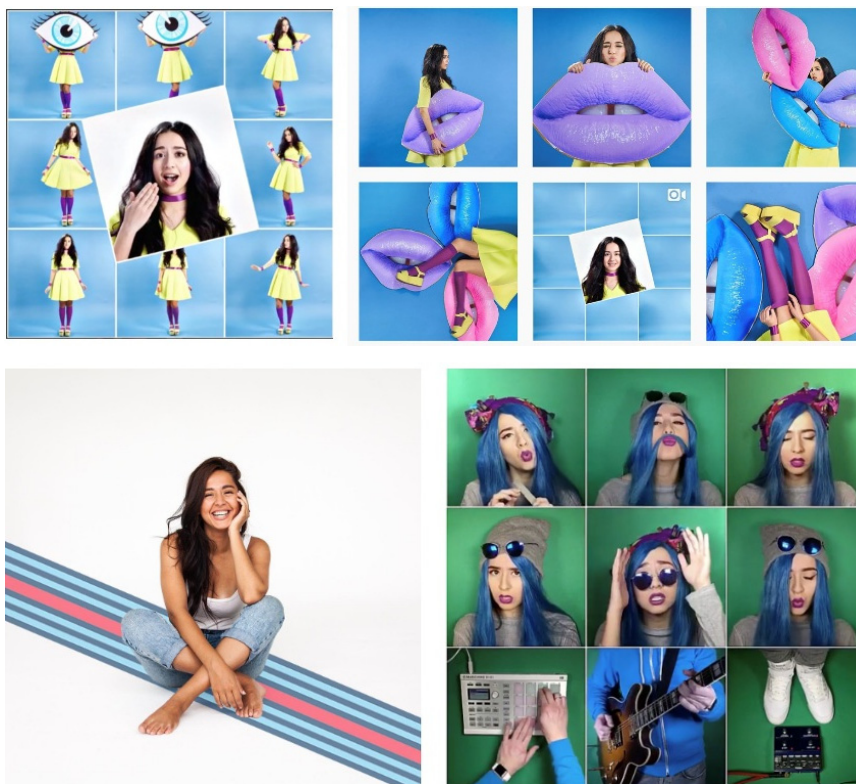
After having investigating the earlier creation of M. in 2015 and 2016, I discovered that previously the artist had demonstrated many markers of natural vitality, e.g. (Fig. 18):

- bright colors of dressing, funny hairdressings and hairstyle, hair-coloring,
- unpredictable moods: experiments with light, fluffy or bright, intense colors (from naive poignancy to sincere naughtiness)

---

<sup>82</sup> M. is not only a singer but an author of her songs both lyrics and music.

- notable accessories, bright hair colors (representation of youth)
- open poses, vivid mimics and freedom of body language as a demonstration of vital redundancy and extravert position.



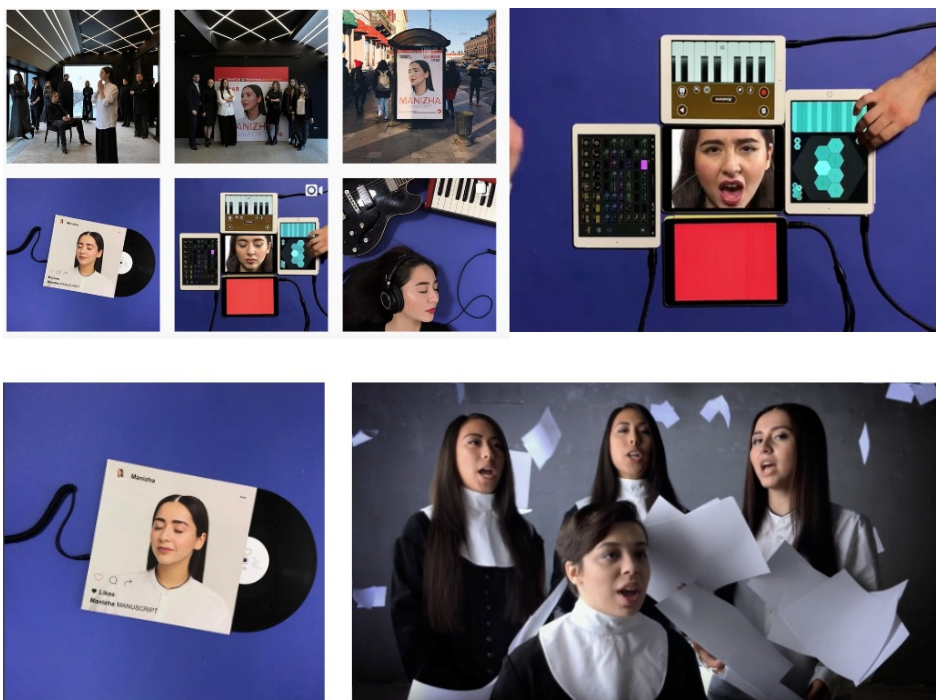
**Figure 18.** Instagram representation of M. in 2016<sup>83</sup>

In early 2016, she presented a 15-seconds video of songs about love. The lyrics of her songs were in English so she had an appearance of a foreign artist. The vocal persona of M. seemed older than her image. It communicated an emotionally warm, unpredictable, but at the same time a secure character. All in all, the vocal persona and her image together constituted a portrait of emotionally warm femininity.

By 2017, her visual representation eventually changed to a more discreet and conceptual artistic image. The most often recurring visual markers in her images during this period became the following (Fig. 19):

<sup>83</sup> Official Instagram account of Manizha. Accessed 29.08.2019:  
<https://www.instagram.com/manizha/>

- closed eyes, minimum visual contact with audience, nude make-up as metaphors of reflection and philosophical deliberations.
- baggy clothes, monochrome clothes as metaphor of “zero” body (negation of body), closed body, neglect of body (rejection of vitality)
- slicked hair, artificiality of her look – to distract attention from her natural hair beauty,
- shuffle movements while performing, as well as artificial, mechanistic, angular movements reminding of robotic appearance,
- cold and unvivid, lifeless mimics also as a negation of vitality.



**Figure 19.** Representation of M. in 2017. Eventually her image and lyrics had become more conceptual and exhibiting much less the signs of the traditional feminine representation.<sup>84</sup>

What is more, she started to use masculinative (male endings of verbs from the first person) in lyrics in Russian that turned her artistic image to be even more conceptual. In this period her lyrics attempt to discover philosophical ideas of confusion, loss and alienation:

<sup>84</sup> Archive of official Instagram account of Manizha. Accessed 22.10.2018: <https://www.instagram.com/manizha/>

“I’m tired. I’ve walked for so long.  
I haven’t found myself in them.  
I would get some paper and some lines  
to begin my epilogue....  
My body was taken apart, trashed and walked all over”<sup>85</sup>  
(Translation from Russian – L.Z.)  
Song “Tired”, 2017<sup>86</sup>

At the same time, her vocal persona remained the same and communicated exactly the opposite connotations to the presented visual image. During this time of development, M’s. voice remained vital, warm, full of energy and passion. The difference between the emotionally warm vocal persona and its cold mechanistic visual representation appeared controversial, which is in some sense can be good but when it comes to building a branding strategy for being recognizable for mass audience and increasing an awareness of the artist that might become problematic. It could be said that from the warm emotional message (in 2015) M. eventually turned towards a cold emotional representation (in 2017).

Visual image: oversize monochrome dressing, no waist dresses, mechanistic movements (shuffle dancing) and sport shoes (Fig. 20). Lyrics about intimate and tender inner world of a woman.



**Figure 20.** Representation of M. in 2017<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Original lyrics: “Я устал. Так долго шел. Я себя в них не нашел. Мне б тетрадь да пару строк. Мне б начать эпилог... Мое тело разобрали, разгромили, растоптали” (Устал, 2017)

<sup>86</sup> Official Youtube channel of Manizha. Accessed 29.08.2019:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tG0huv12J2I>

In her teaser video for a song “Mama”<sup>88</sup>, M. yet again exhibits controversy. The lyrics explicate protection and empathy using metaphors such as “mother’s arms”. The melody consists of discrete split melodic lines and serial patterns and it communicates conceptuality. The visual image shows coldness and insensitivity (Fig. 21). Analysis of her facial expressions demonstrated that she communicates the coldest of emotions: the emotion of contempt. A frown, asymmetrically oblique eyebrow, lifted upper lip and raised cheekbones clearly expressed nasolabial fold in her dynamics.



**Figure 21.** Footage from the video “Mama”

During the analysis, I found out several contradictions/incoherencies occurring very often between her lyrics, music and visual representation.

The analysis of her lyrics demonstrated that the core values of her creativity remained the same: mercy, wisdom, empathy and healing, authenticity. On the other hand, her texts and images became ever more ironic and cold. For example, in her lyrics (singing on her own behalf) she sometimes used masculine verbs in the first person (“я устал, так долго шел” – “I am tired, I was walking for so long”), also there appeared a shift of visual representation where there occurred a tendency to reduce signs of femininity (avoiding naked parts of body, expressive make-up, vivid hair and so on). In fact, that was a contradiction between her traditional values and not-traditional, feministic image. Still, the contradiction between her visual and verbal representation, and her values proved to be deeper than just an opposition of masculine vs. feminine. At the level of expression of her current images all those premises revealed such

---

<sup>87</sup> Footage from the performance of Manizha at TV-show *Vecherny Urgant* 17.10.2017. Accessed 29.08.2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CHcdlhRwOA>

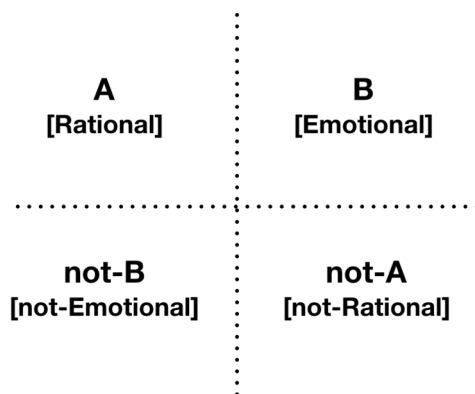
<sup>88</sup> Official Instagram account of Manizha. Accessed 29.08.2019: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BZSwuDYBy-4/>

core oppositions as excessive/efficient, vivid/lifeless, bright/pale, mind/emotions. The main contradictions between her visual representation and lyrics and her vocal persona can be deduced to rational/artificial vs. emotional/natural.

Another remarkable point was that when M. became an ambassador of Apple Inc. she started using many metaphors of a digital body and innovations in her creativity. Together with above-mentioned oppositions (including masculine/feminine opposition), this constituted another large seme of Technology/Nature opposition. So, in order to explore semantic gaps of M's. artistic image, I applied the technique of semiotic square (Greimas square) (see Chapter I, Subchapter 1.5), in which I systematized and extracted mainly the visual creation of M. in the context of this larger perspective. This tool is widely used in applied semiotic research in order to explore deeper level of meaning of any marketing category.

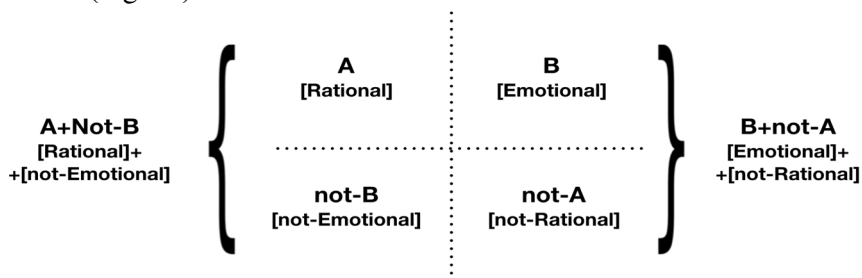
### 2.2.2 Semiotic square

Proceeding from the core contradictions deriving from the current artistic images of M., and taking into account that the final aim is to explore them for a female music artist imagery, I built a semiotic square based on the ultimate opposition between Rational vs. Emotional in representation of female images. This square aimed to exemplify the above-mentioned opposition represented by the vast diversity of M's. images during three years also being capable to map other female images in culture, including music artists (so that M's. current image could be included there also). The basic seme of the semiotic square I built also included the tension of the masculine because M. was committed to traditional values in her creativity, which included a masculine actant. First of all, I built a semiotic square with terms (A [Rational]) vs. (B [Emotional]) and derived from them (Not-A) and (Not-B) terms (Fig.22).



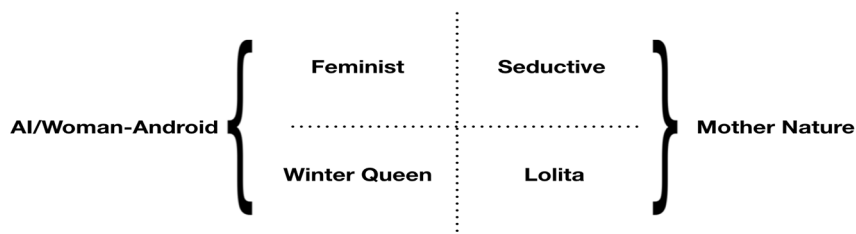
**Figure 22.** [Rational] vs. [Emotional] opposition on semiotic square

After this, and in order to classify the whole diversity of female images in greater depth on a square, I added four meta-terms, which matter more at the level of expression. So, besides the basic terms of semiotic square, there appeared (A+Not-B) to be meta-term representing territory of ([Rational]+[not-Emotional]) (or [Ultimate Rational]) and (B+Not-A) representing territory ([Emotional]+[not-Rational]) (or [Ultimate Emotional]). Abstract meta-terms [Ultimate Rational] and [Ultimate Emotional] in this schema illustrate the opposition of [Technological]/[Natural] at the level of expression of female images in culture. (Fig. 23)<sup>89</sup>



**Figure 23.** The semiotic square with additional meta-terms

In order to “translate” and adapt the schema to the client’s understanding, I also elaborated a metaphor of a “superpower” for each quadrant as titles for illustrating the idea of core values of each territory. (Fig.24)



**Figure 24.** Territories of female images.

- 1) The “superpower” of the quadrant (A [Rational]) female image was *conceptualizing* and I called this quadrant *Feminist*. This image was about deliberations on relationships, about one’s own and partner’s feelings. Core attributes<sup>90</sup> represented in this image are firmness, decisiveness and intelligence.

<sup>89</sup> The other two were not relevant to the final stage of the project so I do not focus on them here.

<sup>90</sup> I mean in this case *brand attributes*, which are consistent profile of an artistic image as a brand that make her recognizable and which are communicated through different channels: her visual representation, tone of voice, topics she sings about, etc.



- 2) The “superpower” of the quadrant (B [Emotional]) female image was *emotional involvement*, and I called it *Seductive Femininity*. This is an image of a woman who is natural, authentic and sacrificial, and her emotions outweigh the mind. She would sacrifice herself in the name of love and her romantic partner. Core attributes of this image are wild energy, freedom and authenticity.
- 3) The “superpower” of the quadrant (Not-A [Not-Rational]) female image was *naivety* and *authenticity* and I called this quadrant *Lolita* as young femininity complementing the top-right quadrant. This is an image of femininity on the threshold between childhood and adult life. While the topics of her songs are not quite adult yet, they are, at the same time, emotional and pure. Core attributes represented in this image are youth, seduction, fragility, vulnerability and egoism.
- 4) The “superpower” of the quadrant (Not-A [Not-Emotional]) female image was *emotional independence* and I called it *Winter Queen*. There were texts of women, which sing about not-personal topics and about being an ambassador of solution of social and political problems. Core attributes of this image are coldness, good judgement, control and insensitivity.

There were also four meta-terms, which I introduced in order to emphasize the liminal ideas of joint quadrants: (A+not-B), (B+not-A), (A+B), (not-B+not-A). By virtue of their liminality, those territories exhibit strong mythological potential.

- 5) The meta-term ([Emotional]+[not-Rational]) represents a territory of *Mother Nature* described in the Subchapter 2.5. This territory embodies all attributes of [Emotional] and [Not-Rational] quadrants: emotional involvement, authenticity, naivety and seduction at the same time. This is an image of woman-insider of traditional culture, familiar, warm and authentic. Core attributes of this image are patronage, healing, connectedness to roots and tradition, sympathy, tenderness, sacrifice, intuition and rebirth.
- 6) And this is precisely the territory of meta-term ([Rational]+[not-Emotional]) where the image of artificial and technological woman appears. It can be represented by any image of Alien Woman (Other) or Robot that embodies of innovative technologies in female image. I called this territory *AI (Artificial Intelligence)/Woman-Android*. Core attributes of this image are technological self-enhancement, artificial intelligence and cyborgization.
- 7) The other two meta-terms were *Creator* (A+B) and *Rebel* (not-B+not-A). Since they did not affect the final results, I will not focus on them here.

In addition, I mapped out all consistent periods of M.'s creativity on the semiotic square and compared the visual representation of the artist, the lyrics of her songs and her vocal persona. It turned out that she experimented with almost all possible territories (besides Winter Queen territory) in her visual creativity and lyrics, while her values and vocal persona remained still closer to the top-right quadrant (Fig. 25).

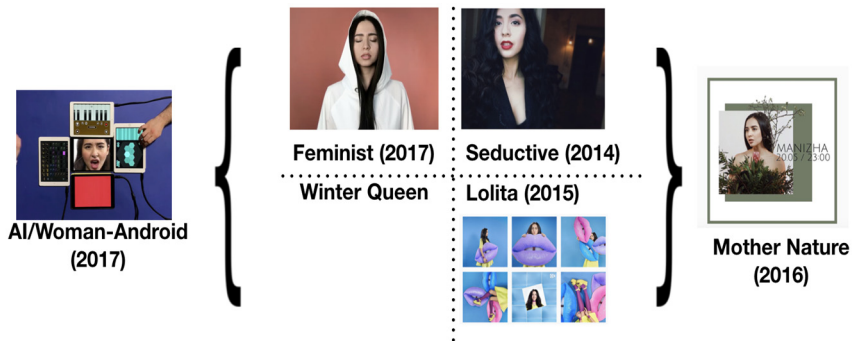


Figure 25. Mapping M's. creativity on semiotic square.

Moreover, the semiotic square evidently demonstrated a semantic gap between vocal persona and current visual image of M., which are situated in diametrically opposite territories of the square (Fig. 26). This insight helped me to explore the possibilities and strategically important territory of M's. brand during the second stage of the project.

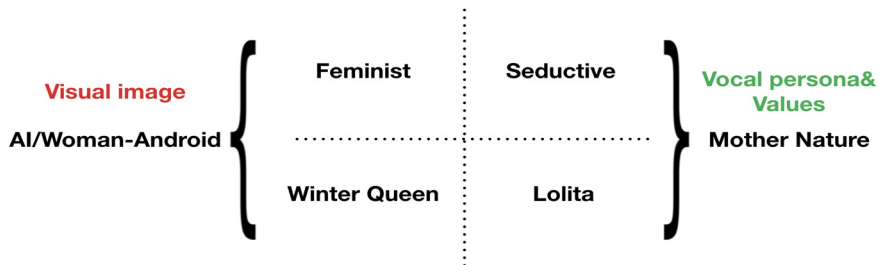


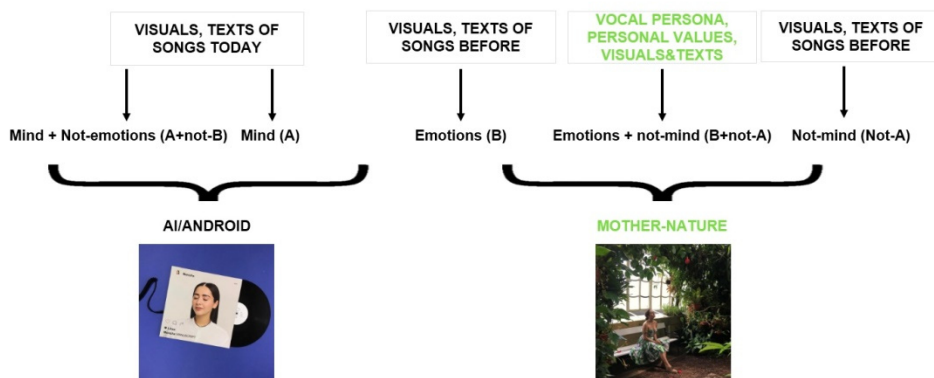
Figure 26. Mapping current Vocal persona, values and visual images of the artist.

After indication of core attributes of each territory, it became clear that the vocal persona of M. and the values of her creation belong to the territory indicated as Mother Nature. Although attributes of M's. visual representation were split in (between) other territories, namely to (A) and (not-A), which are basically controversial territories, (B) and even (A+not-B).

Taking into a consideration that the vocal persona for a music artist is a core and basic manifestation of artistic (and personal) identity, it became evident that a basic territory for building a coherent artistic image would be the Mother Nature territory. Also, this territory is very heuristic positioning territory given its mythological potential, which means that it has universal meaning for different cultures involving traditional or even sacral aspect of femininity representation. That concluded the first stage of this project, which focused on decoding of the current artistic image, whereafter I moved on to the second stage of this research, where I had to explicate semiotic opportunities for developing a coherent artistic image of M.

### 2.3 Description of the second stage

Deriving from the principle of logic that diagonal movement within a square is prohibited for building coherent brand positioning, and that only horizontal or vertical movement within the square is permitted, I deployed the territories onto horizontal scheme in order to demonstrate close and distant territories for the brand. This scheme represents the whole semiotic square except one bottom left quadrant, which is irrelevant to M's. image. This representation shows distances between different territories and demonstrates schematically how those territories are represented in M's artistic creativity. (Fig. 27).



**Figure 27.** Territories in horizontal scale representation.

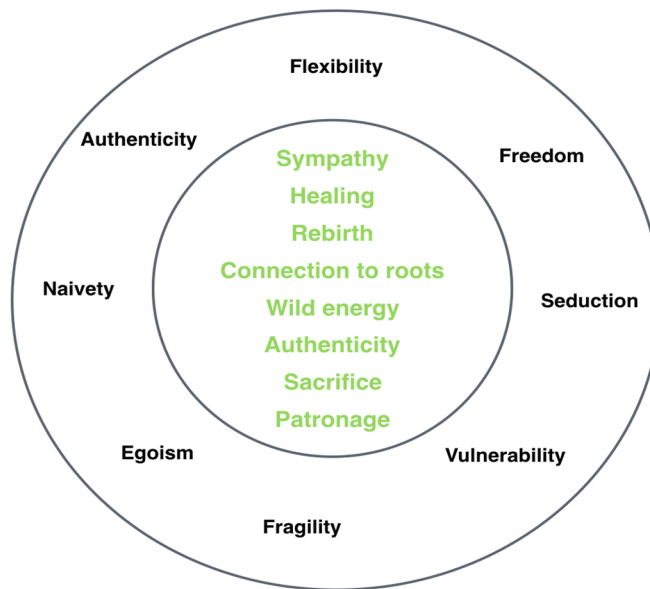
While not avoiding the issue of necessary visual diversity for any musical artist, I still regarded M's. creativity at this stage as an artistic brand. Proceeding from the logic of brand positioning, the level of brand expression should be built around its core values and mission. I had found out previously that the core values of M. as a brand are situated in the territory where Mother Nature female representation is situated. Hence, my recommendations for brand development

started from the idea to re-focus the visual image of M. from the innovative, technological territory to more traditional territory, which is also connected to nature. In order not to shock her audience with drastical changes, she had to make the eventual movement from one territory to another step by step, by adding certain new attributes and avoiding others.

Stemming from the attributes of each territory presented on the semiotic square, I systematized core and additional attributes of the Mother Nature image that would help to elaborate the narrative of the artistic brand identity. The core attributes have to be presented constantly and be emphasized; the additional ones can be added from time to time.

### 2.3.1 Attributes and their signs in brand narrative

I recommended possible directions for her brand narrative based on the following values and attribution of the territory. (Fig. 28)



**Figure 28.** Attributes of Mother Nature territory.

- 1) **Empathy and healing.** M. has to demonstrate that she is full of love towards everybody, that she is emotional and open and can understand anybody, sympathizes with anybody, shares her love and brings harmony to the world. She would have to convey an elder sister figure for her audience, someone who accepts them with whatever troubles they may have.

Signs of empathy: tears, hugs, dialogue with audience (at concerts and online). Colors: emerald as a color of harmony.

- 2) **Rebirth.** What it means is that M. has to emphasize in her songs and interviews that obstacles in life's circumstances cannot bring her down. She deeply worries about her imperfections as a human being but her inner vitality and connection to roots help her to rise from the ashes, so to speak. This attribute of her personality would inspire her audience to believe in themselves, not to give up and keep going.  
The main symbol of rebirth is white color that can be used in costumes and decorations.
- 3) **Patronage.** Articulation of her call to inspire anybody to significant actions in their lives, to push her listener/spectacular towards the first steps in fulfilling their dreams and realizing themselves in some meaningful way.  
Signs: confidence in her own experiences that might be helpful to the other.  
Ruby-garnet color as a symbol of confidence and authority.
- 4) **Connection to roots.** Preservation of family traditions and those of previous generations as a powerful source of inspiration.  
Signs: secrets of family, heirlooms, connection with mother, importance of a mother figure in her life.
- 5) **Wild energy.** Inspiration of femininity stemming from nature and freedom.  
Signs: redundancy in accessories and look, asymmetry and roughness. Demonstration of her thick curly hair, which are important symbol of femininity, beauty and vitality, also as connection to nature. It is very important to show and emphasize their beauty. Mascot taken from nature (crystal, gem).  
Colors: hot red.
- 6) **Authenticity.** Authenticity is a challenge to the culture, establishing of one's own rules originating in unpredictability and uniqueness. Both in songs and public talks it was recommended for her to talk more about her emotions and intuition as an important source for making decisions.  
Signs: redundancy, plethora of details, natural colors, lush decoration of body, natural elements in decoration.
- 7) **Sacrifice.** Accessibility and openness to audience, readiness to listen to her audience and share her energy and vitality with them.  
Signs: more attention is needed to her listeners rather than to herself, avoidance of self-admiration (unlike at Lolita territory), participation in various charities in different forms and giving gifts for listeners.

### 2.3.2 Additional attributes that can be used occasionally

- 8) **Flexibility and freedom.** Creativity and readiness to experiment, articulation of her own creative quest.  
Signs: collage technique, combination of natural and technological forms in design, Do It Yourself objects in her creativity (drawings, hand-made things).
- 9) **Seduction.** Incorporating elements of a game in her image, conveying versatility and unpredictability. Showing a special interest in interlocutor, avoiding indifference and coldness. Spectator should feel being seduced.  
Signs: partly open body, dresses emphasizing silhouette of her body, eye contact with spectator, red lipstick.
- 10) **Naivety, vulnerability, egoism.** Those attributes of Lolita territory she can also take on board from time to time in order to add diversity to her image.

After this, I also introduced a mood board (a code) to inspire the next steps of brand strategy elaboration. I suggested using a combination of two elements, earth and fire, in preparing the design and brand style. Both of them are united in an archaic symbol of rubin crystal that might be one of the symbols of Mother Nature territory. The colors of the brand system, thus, were white (intuition, authenticity), hot red (vitality and wild energy), emerald (harmony, healing) and ruby-garnet color (confidence, connection to earth). One of the main markers of this code was collage technique that can invoke controversial points of meanings and activate the mythological perception of the audience. In addition, I also recommended to avoid signs which connotations might be connected to innovations, robotics, coldness and conceptuality.

## 2.4 Findings

Semiotically speaking, the main aim of this project was translation of an artistic text into the language of mass audience, which coincided with a pure strategic marketing aim to find opportunities for brand positioning of a musical artist.

The main difficulty of this project proved to be a peculiarity and fragility of the research object – the “brand” itself because, unlike most cases, in this case the brand was in fact an artistic creation, which in some ways cannot be changed without compromising the work of a talented person. In other words, the result of my research was not merely a set of recommendations but rather a certain inspirational tool-box for a team of brand strategists for helping them to shape creativity of the artist into a more coherent message for her audience which would explicitly express her values to mass audience.

To sum up, after semiotic analysis of the current image of M., I located the main gap between her vocal persona and visual representation (Instagram, concert and media presentation, video clips). This gap was constituted by a basic opposition of Technologies vs. Nature, which I explored in depth via semiotic square. Comparing the artistic image of M. with other female images, including female singers presented in culture, I found out that her visual representation and lyrics are split between many territories of the semiotic square while at the same time her vocal persona also as her values coherently belong to a territory of Mother Nature. Based on an idea that the vocal persona and values of a music artist are first and foremost orientation points for building her a coherent artistic image, I suggested to create an all-encompassing image and a narrative around M., which would match her vocal persona and her personal values. As the main inspiration tool, I chose a mythologeme of Mother Nature, which is also represented in the same territory (quadrant). I found it to be a good heuristic model for creating a brand strategy as it can succinctly describe the core values of M. image and can inspire the development of her coherent image as an artist with diverse visual representations based on core universal attributes; it is also varying and flexible within many different contexts. Also the choice of one particular territory helped to set up clear boundaries of her artistic image (“don’t” of her artistic image).

After determining the universal idea fitting to the artist, I selected a cultural code and specified its markers, which could personify this mythologeme in an artistic image mostly as a certain aspirational tool for producing new content. While choosing the patterns, I took into account that Mother Nature mythologeme reflects a universal idea of ultimate femininity and embodies traditional values. It derived from the opposition of masculinity and femininity, also as culture and nature. Also this mythologeme unites the idea of femininity with authenticity and uniqueness. The main peculiarity of Mother Nature mythologeme is ambivalent femininity: on the one hand, wise and decisive, authentic and connected to roots, and, on the other hand, movingly defenceless, tender and sensitive. This ambivalence is communicated via visual signs of eternal youth and constant rebirth. The mythologeme of Mother Nature implies unseen presence of the masculine principle, even though it is not communicated by means of a separate sign. What is more, being an unseparated structural unit of mass culture mythology, it has a great potential for artistic image involving mythological mind through music and visual creation. Mother Nature mythologeme includes an idea of sacral femininity, which is an image of an exceptional woman with a strong mission, capable to affect the world. This idea matches to a great extent with an idea of a music idol in general and the values of M. After providing an explanation of this territory, I suggested recommendations and a visual moodboard for a future brand strategy.

As a result, after work with stylists and strategic planners M., changed the colors of her concert dressings from dark to bright, started to produce many collages on her Instagram, where she began to unite natural elements with her own body and making it more vivid in her images and appearing as emotionally

warmer. Also, she started to communicate core attributes of Mother Nature mythologeme within her further activities. Besides creativity and continuing the idea of brand integrity, she endeavored other artistic actions. At one of her concerts, she removed her make-up and encouraged women from the audience to show up in their everyday lives without make-up and post photos of it on Instagram as a fleshmob with a special hashtag. In addition, she started to prepare a web-series with a patronage mission to support Russian women from different regions to embrace themselves as they are. What is more, M. started to insist on core attributes in her public interviews and documentaries.

This case explicated how the method of structural units can be used not only for analysis of existing brand but also as a tool for clarifying future direction of its development and elaboration of a brand strategy.



## CONCLUSIONS

Myth is a cultural universal which permeates all human culture diachronically and various dimensions of culture synchronically. This research is dedicated to the study of myth in contemporary mass culture.

Contemporary mass culture is one of the languages of semiosphere. It can be described as a multidimensional environment of texts, movies, images, artifacts and practices, which has been around almost a century, and has brought along significant transformations since the web 2.0 revolution of the early 2000s. Cultural environment has changed drastically in circumstance of ever increasing and overwhelming noise: visual and audible signals, noise of meanings and small narratives competing with each other. Old mass cultural genres and practices are constantly being transformed (shift from big narratives, long reading and writing to small narratives, scrolling) and new genres appear. Something which remains unchanged is the existential experience of human beings. People continue to admire birth and love, fear death and pain and still tend to reflect upon life and one's own place in the Universe. All those existential meanings are reflected in myths. Mass culture today is one of the most illustrative collections of contemporary texts for finding contemporary myths.

Myth is an inner mechanism which organizes competing signals of mass culture into a semiosphere while building its own center and periphery. Ontologically, myth is a universal of culture preserving its own nature throughout the whole history of mankind. Myth universally reflects various ways of experiencing the world and one's own presence.

There are two general approaches in the myth studies. The first is the analysis of myth as a meta-concept, or a cultural universal. The universal of myth is a result of a mythological mind, which is a peculiar human cognitive aptitude situated on a verge between intuition and rational awareness of the world leading towards continual type of reality perception. It helps human beings to overcome existential discrepancies of the opposition individual vs. nature and facilitates choices in the overwhelming environment of competing meanings where discrete/discontinuous perception is impeded. Thus, the main function of myth is to decrease entropy by reconciling individual with reality and to preserve a comprehensible model of universe for human beings.

The second approach in the myth studies is applied analysis of myth as a cultural form, or mythological texts represented by narratives, images and symbols. Concerning mass culture myth, this approach is common place in the marketing semiotics industry where mass culture mythology is a specific research object. This type of applied research focuses on decoding forms of expression of otherness, beauty, masculinity, femininity, and many other cultural categories. This cultural research usually traces the dynamics of relevant mass culture symbols and images representing currently eternal meanings. I use this approach in my everyday practice and apply some of these

findings here as cases to illustrate my theoretical work. In the current research, I mostly focused on the elaboration of the first approach.

Thus, mass culture mythology is a secondary-modelling system for mass culture and a mechanism of organization of mass culture texts into a coherent universe of meanings and their forms of representation. It is characterized by four main principles peculiar to reason-consequential linkage; anthropocentricity, specific mythological chronotope and naming as habitualization.

Mythological forms can be revealed through structural units of myth which are mythemes and mythologemes. Deriving from ancient texts, those smallest units of myth have preserved inner consistency and have acquired certain contemporary forms within mass culture narrative. In ancient times their function was mainly organizing beliefs about environment, their preservation and transmission in an integral comprehensible form. Unlike ancient times, when smallest units of myth were gathered within strong mythological systems of different local cultures, in this day and age they are split across different genres of global cultural texts and different fields: popular science, arts, advertising, etc.

Not all mythologemes and mythemes can be grasped entirely as discrete elements. Rather, they are quasi-discrete units revealing themselves from syntagmatic relations, whereas they depend on context and their discreteness occurs at the paradigmatic level of texts. Mythologeme and mytheme appear as emic and hybrid structural units respectively, although mytheme can also be regarded as an invariant structure. To consider mythemes as invariants, I also applied *Weltanschauung* Categories of Ultimate Bases.

Mythologemes are paradigmatic invariants. They are consistent universal invariants-kernels of mythological narrative expressing the universal ideas of human presence in the world, and which also help people to fill the gap between empirical reality and inexplicable phenomena. Since mythemes are syntagmatic invariants deployed in mythological narrative, they appear to be recurring motifs articulated in a plot unfold. Mythologemes and mythemes preserve stability within mass culture discourse because they always refer to universal human senses even when appearing in more relevant forms of expression. Both types of the mythological units are semiotic markers of myth in our daily narratives and mass culture in particular.

The presence of the smallest mythological units in culture enables mechanism of translation of cultural texts synchronically and diachronically. As cultural universals, mythological elements “gravitate” towards the centre (bottom) of the entire semiosphere, where they are concentrated in the most ancient, the most famous texts throughout entire history. At the same time, due to their simple form, they permeate all culture and help contemporary texts of culture to acquire similarity to the most famous and commonly known and thus to move from the periphery to the center of semiosphere. In this way smallest mythological units trace the dialectics of semiosis in culture as permanent rotation of cultural forms.

On the other hand, mythologemes and mythemes can be used in purpose in mass culture texts as they easily trigger mythological mind of the audience. Often they might become anchors of existential-mythological valorization during the process of choice between competing narratives. This tendency reveals itself in the marketing perspective during the process of decommodification, which is a symbolic aspect of the appropriation process of mass cultural goods.

Further in my research, I discussed several instances of the structural units of myth, which are commonly present in mass cultural texts. I concerned myself with mythologemes of Fate, Course, Universe, Catastrophe, Golden Age, and Mother Nature. Also, I considered two universal ontological mythemes of Transformation and Backtracking.

I established that mythologemes could either play a specific actantial role within a narrative (the Fate, the Course, and the Mother Nature), or describe mythological chronotope (the Universe, the Catastrophe, and the Golden Age). In turn, mythemes reveal an inner strategy of unrolling mythological narrative frontwards or backwards. Deriving from texts of culture, mythologemes and mythemes become a bridge between empirical reality and coherent world picture. They contribute towards decreasing existential anxiety of human beings in the world and help finding a tangible form to explain fear, justice/injustice, birth and death, time, transformation, etc.

The mythologemes of Fate and Course help to understand individual life as a part of an integral whole. The mythologeme of Mother Nature relates to the existential search for inner authenticity and identity. The mythologemes of Universe, Catastrophe, and Golden Age constitute an integral triad of the idea about time and space (past-present-future) and reflect human existential quest for an integral explanation of the world origin, nostalgia for the past and fears towards the future.

The mytheme of Transformation represents the idea of mythological miracle, and the mytheme of Backtracking appeals to the idea of a mastered time and space; in other words, the center of the individual's semiosphere.

Structural elements penetrating texts as possible mythological forms can be classified by different criteria. I decided to classify the most common and meaningful of them by their structural principle: the emic units (mythologemes) and the ones possessing hybrid structure (mythemes).

It is (indeed) possible to classify the emic units by their subjects by way of analogy with ancient myths: cosmogonic, anthropogonic, and structuring social semiosphere. Cosmogonic mythologemes appear in the narratives about Universe and models of time and space and their origin. Those are the mythologeme of Universe, the mythologeme of Catastrophe and the mythologeme of Golden Age. Anthropogonic mythologemes are related to individuals' life and its structure: the mythologeme of Fate and the mythologeme of Course. The mythologemes structuring social semiosphere through the quest of identity appear within mass culture narratives about collective memory. I discussed above the example of the Mother Nature mythologeme, there is also another

mythologeme related to this group, which is the Hero mythologeme. However, as it does not directly correlate to culture-nature mythological opposition, I left it out from the current discussion.

While there could be other mythemes found, I analyse those, which are universal ontological mythemes and reflect ideas about natural phenomena in culture and reveal them in mass culture texts. That is why I discussed mythemes through the WCUB and dissipated two of them – namely the mytheme of Transformation, or Miracle, and the mytheme of Backtracking.

Further in this research, I also demonstrated the process of finding more minimal units of myth in cultural texts of different genres. The first case was dedicated to close analysis of the television communication of the Ukrainian politician Darth Vader. I analyzed how communication of the politician involved important transmitters of mythological images for Ukrainian culture. I found out that his narrative was full of combinations of polar meanings discovering mythological dimension of the message. Two main protagonists of the communication were agents of two separate mythological generations: archaic mythology (Mother Nature) and contemporary mass culture mythology (Darth Vader). Among other structural units there were the Eutopia/Garden, the Trickster, and the Death. What is more, some of those archaic mythologemes acquired new forms within the text; in this way trickster appeared in the image of Darth Vader and Eutopia in an image of the Internet Party. By this combination of archaic meanings and contemporary forms, the narrative became semiotically saturated and produced new powerful connotations. This case showed how a significant trickster's image of mass culture became a bridge between mythological mind, mass culture, and political discourse.

In addition, I demonstrated an applied case from my practices, where the Mother Nature mythologeme was used as a branding tool for the image of a music artist. I used semiotic analysis for tracing down a problem of disintegration of her artistic brand in which there appeared to be a gap between the forms of expression and values of the artist. Mapping out the territories of the singer images, I discovered that her personal values and her authentic vocal persona clearly lean towards the female image represented in culture by Mother Nature mythologeme. The demonstration of different cultural forms of the mythologeme enabled to build a coherent narrative around an artist's brand and select precise image corresponding to her inner identity (tone of voice of the brands, costumes and visual media representations, etc.).

In this case the mythologeme made it possible to articulate inner brand identity by way of appropriate forms of expression relevant to wide mass culture context and, therefore, also comprehensible to mass audience.

## THE FUTURE DIRECTIONS

From mass culture studies I found out that linear scenaria in general, and in mass culture in particular, are losing their relevance and request for a non-linear “open” texts will increase. Thus, it would be of great interest to continue finding and analyzing different examples of contemporary cross-genre forms of the presented smallest mythological units. One of the important aspects would be discovering a mechanism how they preserve their consistency even in the “open” non-linear texts. In this respect transmedial storytelling (Henry Jenkins) and hybrid storytelling (Tom Abba) are promising directions. Another important direction is to consider how structural units of myth exist in social media reality, particularly in relation to the circulation of the memes.

As mentioned previously, due to the limitations of the research, I did not present an exhaustive list of mythologemes and mythemes represented in mass culture. In future, I would like to continue collecting empirical data of the texts to study other mythologemes and mythemes existing in mass culture to extend the present list of the smallest mythological units. That would be of specific interest in comparing mass culture mythology as appearing in other cultural contexts as it is demonstrated by Devdutt Pattanaik (2006, 2013). As well, I find it promising to trace down the details as to how transformed specific mythologemes and mythemes have been represented throughout the history of mass culture.

Another direction that interests me, is combining these current research findings with the possibilities inherent in cognitive semiotics. I would like to study how the background of different local cultural paradigms influences the perception of the same mythologemes/mythemes in masscultural context for representators of different cultural traditions. I aim to review in my further practise by methods of qualitative research, how people perceive mythologemes and mythemes in marketing messages. It would be also interesting to focus on visualisation of verbal language in the printed advertisements via the semiotic dimension of graphic design and to examine the interrelations that exist between image/text/sound in the audio-visual case studies. The extension of the smallest structural units of myth collection can provide with increase of tools for building coherent marketing messages.

To conclude, I believe that further exploration of the mythologemes and mythemes will indeed help finding other semiotic markers of myth and can assist understanding human mind and culture better.

## REFERENCES

- Agapkina, Tatjana 2002. Molchanie (Silence). In: Tolstaya, Svetlana (ed.) *Slavianskaia mifologija. Entsiklopedicheskij slovar (Slavic mythology. Encyclopedic dictionary)*. 2 ed. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnoshenija, 303–304.
- Akhmetova, Maria 2005. Ozhidania kontsa sveta v religioznyh subkulturakh post-sovetskoj Rossii (Anticipation of End Times in religious subcultures of postsoviet Russia). In: Akhmetova, Maria (comp.) *Sovremennaja rossijskaja mifologija (Contemporary Russian mythology)*. Moscow: Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj gumanitarnyj universitet, 207–238.
- Averintsev, Sergei 1970. Sudba (Fate). In: Konstantinov, Fedor (ed.) *Filosofskaja entsiklopedija*. Vol.5. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe nauchnoe izdatelstvo “Sovetskaja entsiklopedija”, 158–159.
- Averintsev, Sergei 2006. *Sofia-logos. Slovar. Sobranie sochinenij (Sofia-logos. Dictionary. Collection of papers)*. Averintseva, Nataliya; Sigov, Konstantin (eds.). Kyiv: Dukh i litera.
- Bachinin, Viacheslav; Zhuravskij, Vitalij; Panov, Mihhail 2003. *Filosofija prava: slovnyk (Philosophy of Law: Dictionary)*. Kyiv: Vydavnychyj Dim “In Jure”.
- Bakare, Lanre 2015. The force awakens (in Ukraine): Darth Vader statue replaces Lenin monument. *The Guardian*. [online] 23d October. Accessed 20.11.2018: <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/oct/23/darth-vader-statue-erected-ukraine>
- Barthes, Roland 1977[1957]. Mythologies. In: Barthes, Roland. *Image. Music. Text*. Heath, Stephen (transl., ed.) London: Fontana Press.
- Baudrillard, Jean 1996[1968]. *The System of Objects*. Benedict, James (transl.) London, New York: Verso.
- Baudrillard, Jean 1998[1970]: *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. London: SAGE.
- Bell, Daniel 2000[1960]. *The End of Ideology: On The Exhaustion of Political Ideas*. Harvard: Harvard University Press
- Benjamin, Walter 1996[1936]. *Work of art in the epoch of his technical producibility. Select essays*. Moscow: Psychic.
- Benveniste, Émile 1967. Fondements syntaxiques de la composition nominale. *Bulletin de la Société de linguistique de Paris*, 62.1, 15–31.
- Bignell, Jonathan 2002. *Media semiotics. An introduction*. 2 ed. Manchester and NY: Manchester University press.
- Bolter, Jay David; Grusin, Richard 2000. *Remediation. Understanding New Media*. MIT Press.
- Brunner, Karl 1987. The Perception of Man and the Conception of Society: Two Approaches to Understanding Society. *Economic Inquiry*, July, v. 25, 367–388.
- Buckingham, David 2007. Childhood in the Age of Global Media. *Children’s Geographies*, Vol. 5, Nos 1–2, 43–54, February–May, 43–54.
- Buckingham, David; Sefton-Green, Julian 2003. Gotta catch ’em all: structure, agency and pedagogy in children’s media culture. *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 25. London: Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, 379–399.
- Buslaev, Fedor 1987. *Russkij bogaturskij epos. Russkij naridnyj epos (Russian bogatyr epos. Russian folk epos)*. Voronezh: Tsentralno-Chernozemnoe knizhnoe izdatelstvo.
- Campbell, Joseph 2008[1949]. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Carroll, Deirdre 2015. Meet The Millennials. *Vision Monday*. 1/19/2015, Vol. 29 Issue 1, 36–42.
- Cassirer, Ernst 1955[1923–29]. *The philosophy of symbolic forms. Volume two: mythological thought*. Manheim, Ralph (transl.). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Chernyshkov, Dmitrij 2012. *Globalizatsija kak mifologema obshestvennogo soznaniya: sotsialno-filosfskij analiz* (Globalization as mythologeme of social mind: social and philosophic analysis). Extended abstract of PhD thesis (Social philosophy). Barnaul: Biysk technological institute.
- Colette, Shelly Carmen 2012. *The Garden, the Serpent, and Eve: An Ecofeminist Narrative Analysis of Garden of Eden Imagery in Fashion Magazine Advertising*. PhD thesis. Ottawa: University of Ottawa.
- Danesi, Marcel 2008. *X-Rated!: the power of mythic symbolism in popular culture*. NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Debord, Guy Loius 1994[1967]. *The Society of the spectacle*. New York: Zone Books.
- Dvoret'skij, Iosif (Ed) *Drevnegerchesko-Russkii Slovar'* (Ancient Greek – Russian Lexicon). Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo inostrannykh i natsional'nykh slovarei, 1958.
- Eco, Umberto 1962. *Opened work: A form and vagueness is in modern poetics*. Shurbelev, Andrej. (transl.). Saint-Petersburg: Academic project.
- Eco, Umberto 2005[1979]. Role of reader: Research on the semiotics of text. P. Silver (transl.). Saint-Petersburg: Symposium.
- Eliade, Mircea 1959. *Cosmos and history. The myth of eternal return*. New York: Harper&Brothers.
- Eliade, Mircea 1995[1964]. *Aspekty mifa (Aspects of myths)*. V. Bolshakov (transl.). Moscow: Invest-PPP.
- Epstein, Edward Jay 1982. *The Rise and Fall of Diamonds: The Shattering of a Brilliant Illusion*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Ernshtedt, Petr 1953. *Egipetskie Zaimstvovaniya v Grecheskom Yazyke*. (Egyptian influences in Greek). Moscow: Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR.
- Flier, Andrej 1998. Massovaja kultura i jejo sotsialnye funktsii (Mass culture and its components), *Obshestvennye nauki i sovremennost*, №6: 138–148.
- Floch, Jean-Marie 1985. *Petites Mythologies de l'œil et de l'esprit*. Paris-Amsterdam: Editions Hades-Benjamins.
- Floch, Jean-Marie 2001[1990]. *Semiotics, Marketing and Communication: Beneath the Signs, the Strategies*. Bodkin, Robin Orr (transl.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Flood, Christopher 2001. *Political Myth*. NY, London: Routledge.
- Foucault, Michel 1985. Other Spaces: The Principles of Heterotopia. *Double Cross, Lotus International*, No. 48149. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.
- Freidenberg, Olga 1998. *Mif i literatura drevnosti*. Moscow: Vostochnaja literatura "RAN".
- Freud, Sigmund 1939. *Moses and Monotheism*. Katherine Jones (transl.). Letchworth, Hertfordshire: The Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis.
- Frisk, Hjalmar 1960. *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Etymological Dictionary of Greek). Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag.
- Fromm, Erich Seligman 1996. Chelovek odinok (Man is lonely). Oblonskaja R. (transl.). *Inostrannaja literatura*. №1, 230–233.
- Frye, Northrop 1990 [1983]. *The Great Code: The Bible & Literature*. Harmondsworth, England: PenguinBooks.

- Geldern, James von 1995. Introduction. In: Geldern, James von; Stites, Richards (eds.) 1995. *Mass culture in Soviet Russia: tales, poems, songs, movies, plays, and folklore, 1917–1953*. Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press: xi–xxvii.
- Gladarev, Boris 2006. Shopping kak rudiment religioznogo soznaniya (Shopping as a vestige of religious mind). *Chelovek, Soobshestvo, Upravlenije*. № 1, 110–119.
- Goran, Vasilij 1990. *Drevnegrecheskaya Mifologema Sud'by* (Ancient Greek mythologeme of fate). Novosibirsk: Nauka.
- Gottdiener, Mark; Lagopoulos, Alexandros Ph. 1985. Hegemony and Mass Culture: semiotic approach. *American Journal about Sociology*. Vol. 90. №5, 979–1001.
- Graaf de, John; Wann, David; Naylor, Thomas. H. 2014. *Affluenza. How overconsumption is killing us – and how we can fight back*. 3 ed. San Francisco: Berrett Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- Greimas, Algirdas Julien 1966. Éléments pour une théorie de l'interprétation du récit mythique. *Communications*, vol. 8, № 8. Paris: Seuil: 28–59.
- Greimas, Algirdas Julien 2004[1966]. *Structural semantics: Search of method*. Zimina, Liudmila (transl.). Moscow: The Academic project.
- Grigorjeva, Elena 2007. *Space-Time, mythological geometry*. *Sign Systems Studies* 35, 1/2: 161–215.
- Grinshpun, Helena 2014. *Deconstructing a global commodity: coffee, culture, and consumption in Japan*. *Journal Of Consumer Culture* 14(3): 343–364.
- Gusejnov, Gasan 2005. Populiarnaka geopolitika i novaja mifologija. In: Akhmetova, Maria (comp.) = *Sovremennaja rossijskaya mifologiya*. Moscow: Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj gumanitarnyj universitet, 51–67.
- Gusejnov, Gasan; Rashkovskij, Evgenij (eds.), Barenbojm, Petr (comp.) 2012. *Filosofija prava Piatknizhija (Philosophy of Law in the Torah)*. Moscow: LUM.
- Habermas, Jürgen 1991[1962]. *The structural transformation of the public sphere*. Burger, Thomas, Lawrence, Frederick (transl.). Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Hendy, Andrew 2001. *The Modern Construction of Myth*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Hoffman, Johannes Baptist 1974. *Ετυμολογικόν Λεξικόν της Αρχαίας Ελληνικής* (Etymological Dictionary of Greek). Athens.
- Hollis, James 2010[2004]. *Mifologemy: voploshenija nevidimogo mira (Mythologemes: Incarnations of the Invisible World)*. Moskva: Nezavisimaja firma “Klass”.
- Holt, Douglas B. 2003. *How Brands Become Icons*. Harvard: Harvard Business School Press.
- Horkheimer, Max; Adorno, Theodor W. 1972[1944]. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Cumming, John (transl.). New York: Continuum.
- Houellebecq, Michel 1998. *Approches du désarroi*. In: *Rester vivant et autres texts*. Libro, Texte Integral, 39–55.
- Huizinga, Johan 1994[1938]. *Homo Ludens*. Mokrovolskij (transl.). Kyiv: Rus’.
- Huysen, Andreas 1986. *After the Great Divide*. Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP.
- Iedema, Rick 2003. Multimodality, resemiotization: extending the analysis of discourse as multisemiotic practice. *Semiotica* 137–1/4 (2001), 23–39.
- Ivanov, Viacheslav 1998[1978]. Chet i nechet. Assimetria mozga i znakovyh sistem. In: Ivanov, Viacheslav. *Izbrannye trudy po semiotike i istorii kultury. Znakovye sistemy. Kino. Poetika*. Vol.1. Moscow: Shkola “Jazyki russkoj kultury”, 381–602.



- Ivanov, Viacheslav 2007[1996]. Semiosfera i istorija. In: Ivanov, Viacheslav. *Izbrannye trudy po semiotike i istorii kulturey. Semiotika kulturey, iskusstva, nauki*. Vol.4. Moscow: Shkola "Jazyki russkoj kulturey", 180–184.
- Ivanov, Viacheslav 2007[1973]. Kategorija vremeni v iskusstve i kulture XX veka. In: Ivanov, Viacheslav. *Izbrannye trudy po semiotike i istorii kulturey. Semiotika kulturey, iskusstva, nauki*. Vol.4. Moscow: Shkola "Jazyki russkoj kulturey", 189–226.
- Ivanov, Viacheslav 2009. *Mifologija i folklor. Izbrannye trudy po semiotike i istorii kulturey*. Vol 5. Moscow: Znak.
- Ivanov, Viacheslav 2009[1969]. Zametki o tipologicheskom i sravnitelno-istoricheskom issledovanii rimskoj i indoevropskoj mifologii. In: Ivanov, Viacheslav. *Izbrannye trudy po semiotike i istorii kulturey. Mifologija i folklor*. Vol.5. Moscow: Znak, 219–245.
- Ivanov, Viacheslav; Toporov Vladimir 1965. *Slavianskie jazykovye modelirujushie semioticheskie sistemy: Drevnij period*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Ivanov, Viacheslav; Toporov Vladimir 1974. *Issledovanija v oblasti slavianskih drevnostej: Leksicheskie i frazeologicheskie voprosy rekonstruiranii tekstov*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Ivanov, Viacheslav; Toporov Vladimir 1995. Sud (Trial). In: Petruhin, Vladimir; Agapkina, Tatyana; Vinogradova, Lyudmila; Tolstaya, Svetlana (eds.). *Slavyanskaya mifologiya. Entsiklopedicheskij slovar'*. (Slavic mythology. Encyclopedic dictionary). Moscow: Ellis Lak, 370.
- Jameson, Frederic 1992 *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Jung, Carl Gustav; Kerényi, Carl 1996[1941]. Vvedenie v sushchnost' mifologii (Introduction to the Essence of Mythology). In: *Dusha i mif: Shest' archetipov* (Soul and myth: the six archetypes). Kyiv: Gosudarstvennaja biblioteka Ukrainy dlia junoshstva, 11–208.
- Jung, Carl Gustav 1960[1938]. *Psychology and Religion*. Yale: Yale University Press.
- Kahl, Jochem 2002. *Frühägyptisches Wörterbuch*. Unter Mitarbeit von Markus Bretschneider und Barbara Kneißler. Harrassowitz Verlag – Wiesbaden.
- Kaplunenko, Alexandr; Ryzhova, Viktoria, 2013. Osobennosti reprezentatsii ideologemy "vozhd" v kitaiskom politicheskom panegirike (The Peculiarities of Representation of the Archetypical Ideologeme of "Chief" in the Chinese Language Perception). *Vestnik TOGU* № 3(30), 241–248.
- Karpovets, Maksym 2014. *Misto jak svit liuds'koho buttia* (City as the World of Human Being). Ostroh: Vydavnytstvo natsionalnoho universytetu "Ostroz'ka akademija".
- Kasavin, Il'ya 1990. *Zabluzhdayushchiysya razum? Mnogoobrazie vnenauchnogo znaniya*. (Wrongheaded mind: diversity of unscientific knowledge). Moscow: Politizdat.
- Kazanskene, Vanda; Kazanskij, Nikolai 1986. *Predmetno-ponyatiinyi slovar' grecheskogo yazyka. Krito-mikenskii period* (Subject and Conceptual Dictionary of Greek: Cretan-Mycenaean Period). Leningrad: NAUKA, 1986.
- Khazov, Vladimir 2009. *Mifologemy rossijskoj kulturey postsovetskogo perioda (1990-e gody): filosofskij analiz* (Mythologemes of postsoviet Russian culture (1990-s): the philosophic analysis). Extended abstract of PhD dissertation (Philosophy). Astrahan': Astrahan' State University.
- Kirby, Alan 2001. *The Death of Postmodernism And Beyond*. Electronic resource. Accessed

- 20.21.2018:[http://philosophynow.org/issues/58/The\\_Death\\_of\\_Postmodernism\\_And\\_Beyond](http://philosophynow.org/issues/58/The_Death_of_Postmodernism_And_Beyond).
- Kirby, Alan 2009. *Digimodernism: how new technologies dismantle the postmodern and reconfigure our culture*. NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.
- Klastrup, Lisbeth; Tosca, Susana 2004. Transmedial Worlds – Rethinking Cyberworld Design. *International Conference on Cyberworlds*. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 409–416.
- Klein, Naomi 2000. *No logo: taking aim at the brand bullies*. Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Klimova, Liudmila 2005. *Massovaja kultura i lichnost: kulturfilosofskij aspekt* (Mass culture and personality: cultural-philosophical aspect). PhD thesis (Philosophical anthropology). Stavropol: Stavropol state university.
- Kolakowski, Leszek 1989[1972]. *The Presence of Myth*. University of Chicago Press
- Kordonskij, Simon 2006. *Mifologemy i Ideologemy (Mythologemes and Ideologemes). Rynki Vlasti: Administrativnye Rynki SSSR i Rossii* (Markets of Authority: Administrative Markets of USSR and Russia). Moskva: OGI.
- Kostina, Anna 2006. *Massovaja kultura kak fenomen postindustrialnogo obshestva* (Mass culture as a phenomenon of postindustrial society). Moscow: KomKniga: URSS.
- Kotler, Philip et al. 2010. *Marketing 3.0: From products to customers to the human spirit*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Kozin, Shamil'; Akhmetova, Maria 2005. Mifologicheskij motiv i manipulativnaja dejatel'nost' na finansovyh runkah (Mythological motive and manipulative activity at financial markets). In: Akhmetova, Maria (comp.) *Sovremennaja rossijskaya mifologiya (Contemporary Russian Mythology)*. Moscow: Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj gumanitarnyj universitet, 239–256.
- Kress, Gunther; Leeuwen van, Theo 2006. *Reading images. The grammar of visual design*. London and NY: Routledge.
- Kull, Kalevi 2005. Semiosphere and a Dual Ecology: Paradoxes of Communication. *Sign Systems Studies* 33 (1): 175–89.
- Kurennoi, Vitalij 2014. *Funksii massovoj kultury* (Functions of mass culture). Lecture on a Youtube channel of Post-Nauka. Accessed 06.01.2014: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jlvulr45xGo>.
- Kyrylyuk, Olexander 1996. *Mif (Myth)*. Odessa: Ros'.
- Kyrylyuk, Olexander 2008. *Svitogljadni kategorii granychnyh pidstav v universal'nyh vymirah kul'tury (Weltsanschauung categories of ultimate bases in universal culture dimensions)*. Odesa: Avtograf.
- Kyrylyuk, Olexander 2014. *Universalija bezsmertia u dyskursi Doli: G.Skovoroda, O.Pushkin, T.Shevchenko, L.Tolstoy, M. Kyryienko-Voloshyn – Do 200-richya T.G.Shevchenka* (Immortality in the Discourse of Destiny: H.Skovoroda, A.Pushkin, T.Shevchenko, L.Tolstoy, M.Kiryienko-Voloshyn – On the 200th anniversary of Taras Shevchenko). Odessa: CHO UNAS.
- Kys Oksana 2006. Kogo oberigaie behynia, abo matriarkhat jak cholovichyj vynahid. "Ja" (*Informatsijno-osvitnie vydannia*). Kharkiv. № 4(16): 11–16
- Larrain, Jorge 1980. *The concept of ideology*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Lebediev, Vadym 2010. *Anatomija masovoji kultury (Anatomy of mass culture)*. Kharkiv: Fort.

- Leguil, Clotilde 2015. Le grand méchant et le petit autre. *Philosophie Magazine, Hors-série*, No. 27, Octobre 2015. Paris: Philo Éditions SAS, 36–38.
- León, José Luis 2001. *Mitoanálisis de la publicidad*. Barcelona: Ariel.
- Leone, Massimo 2015. The semiotics of innovation. In: Trifonas, Peter Pericles (ed.), *International handbook of semiotics*, NY, London: Springer: 377–388.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude 1963[1958]. *Structural anthropology*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude 2000[1964]. *Mifologiki. Syroe i prigotovlennoe* (Mythologiques: Le Cru et le Cuit). Sokuler, Z, Akopian, Karen. (transl.). Moscow: Universitetskaja kniga.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude 2001[1978]. *Myth and Meaning*. London and New York: Routledge Classics.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude 2007[1971]. *Mifologiki. Chelovek golyi* (Mythologiques: L'Homme nu). Akopian, Karen. (transl.). Moscow: FreeFly.
- Levkievskaja, Elena 2005. Russkaia ideia v kontekste istoricheskikh mifologicheskikh ideiah i mehanizmy ih obrazovanija. In: Akhmetova, Maria (comp.) *Sovremennaja rossijskaya mifologiya* (Contemporary Russian mythology). Moscow: Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj gumanitarnyj universitet, 175–206.
- Lizka, James Jakob 1989. *The Semiotic of Myth. A Critical Study of the Symbol*. Indiana University Press.
- Lobok, Aleksandr 1997. *Antropologija mifa* (Anthropology of myth). Ekaterinburg: Bank kul'turnoi informatsii.
- Losev, Aleksei 1991[1930]. *Dialektika mifa* (*Dialectics of myth*). Moscow: Pravda.
- Lotman, Juri 1973. Ideinaja struktura poemy Pushkina “Andzhelo”. In: Lotman, Juri *Izbrannye statji*. Vol.II. Tallinn: Aleksandra, 430–444.
- Lotman, Juri 1977. *The structure of the artistic text*. Ronald Vroon, Ann Arbor (transl.). University of Michigan Press.
- Lotman, Juri 1985. O mifologicheskom kode suzhetnyh tekstov (On mythological code of narrative texts). In: *Semiosphere*. Saint-Petersburg: Iskusstvo SPB, 671–674.
- Lotman, Juri 1990. *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. Ann Shukhman (transl.). Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Lotman, Juri 1992. Vmesto predislovija (Instead of introduction). In: Lotman, Juri. *Izbrannye statii* (Selected papers). Vol.I. Tallinn: Aleksandra, 9–11.
- Lotman, Juri 1998[1970]. Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta (Structure of artistic text). *Ob iskusstve*. Saint Petersburg: Iskusstvo-SPB.
- Lotman, Juri 2000[1986]. Dom v «Mastere I Margarite» (The home in the Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*). In: Lotman, Juri. *Semiosfera* (*The Semiosphere*). Collected edition, Nikolajuk N.(ed). Saint-Petersburg: Iskusstvo SPB, 319–325.
- Lotman, Juri 2000a[1992]. Kultura i vzryv (Culture and explosion). In: *Semiosfera* (*The Semiosphere*). Collected edition, Nikolajuk N.(ed). Saint-Petersburg: Iskusstvo SPB, 12–149.
- Lotman, Juri 2000b[1992]. Vnutri myslyashih mirov (The universe of mind). In: *Semiosfera*. (*The Semiosphere*). Collected edition, Nikolajuk N.(ed). Saint-Petersburg: Iskusstvo SPB, 150–391.
- Lotman, Juri 2005[1984]. On Semiosphere. *Signs Systems Studies* 17: 5–23. Translated from the original Russian language version, published in Lotman, Juri 1992. Selected articles. Tallinn.

- Lotman, Juri and Uspensky, Boris 1971. O semioticheskom mehanizme kulturey (On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture). *Trudy po znakovym sistemam (Sign Systems Studies)* 5: 144–166.
- Lotman, Juri 1973. Mif – imya – kul'tura. *Trudy po znakovym sistemam (Sign Systems Studies)* 6: 282–303.
- Lucid, Daniel, ed. 1977. *Soviet semiotics: an anthology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Macdonald, Dwight 1956[1953]. A theory of mass culture. In: Rosenberg, Bernard; White, David Manning (eds.). *Mass culture: The popular arts in America*. Glencoe: The free press, 59–73.
- Mamardashvili, Merab; Piatigorsky, Aleksander 1997. *Simvol i Soznanie. Metafizicheskie rassuzhdeniya o soznanii, simvole i jazyke*. (Symbol and mind. Metaphysical reasonings about mind, symbole, and language). Moscow: Shkola.
- Mark, Margaret; Pearson, Carol S. 2001. *The Hero and The Outlaw. Building Extraordinary Brands Through the Power of Archetypes*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Masterov, Boris 1995. *Psikhologiya samorazvitiya: Psihotekhnika riska i pravila bezopasnosti*. (Psychology of self-development: Psychotechnics of risk and safety rules). Riga: Eksperiment.
- McLuhan, Herbert Marshall 1994[1964]. *Understanding Media: The extensions of man*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Meletinsky, Eleazar 1976a. *Ot mifa k literature: Uchebnoe posobie* (From myth to literature). Moscow: NaukaU.
- Meletinsky, Eleazar 1976b. *Poetika mifa* (Poetics of myth). Moscow: Nauka.
- Meletinsky, Eleazar 1998. Mif i dvadtsatyj vek (Myth and the 20<sup>th</sup> century). In: Meletinsky, Eleazar. *Izbrannye statji. Vospominaniya*. Moscow: Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj gumanitarnyj universitet, 419–426.
- Men'shikova, Ekaterina 2011. Mify i mifologemy turisticheskogo narrativa (Myths and mythologemes of tourist narrative). *Filologicheskie nauki. Voprosy teorii i praktiki. Tambov: Gramota*. 3 (10): 98–100.
- Militarev, Alexander. *Egyptian Etymology*. Electronic Database. Accessed 28.09.2019: <http://starling.rinet.ru/cgi-bin/main.cgi?root=config&morpho=0>
- Mishhenko, Nataliya 1999. *Mass culture as the subject of philosophical analysis: Extended abstract of PhD dissertation (Philosophy)*. Kharkiv State University, Kharkiv.
- Moles, Abraham M. 1967. *Sociodynamique de la culture*. Paris-La Haye: Mouton et Cie.
- Mosco, Vincent 2004. *The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power, and Cyberspace*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Mischenko, Nataliya 1999. *Masova kultura jak predmet filosofskoho analizu: Extend abstract PhD thesis*, Kharkiv: Kharkivskiyi state university.
- Nekliudov, Sergey 2005. *Struktura i funktsiya mifa* (Structure and function of myth). In: Akhmetova, Maria (comp.) *Sovremennaja rossijskaya mifologiya* (Contemporary Russian mythology). Moscow: Rossijskij gosudarstvennyj gumanitarnyj universitet, 9–26.
- Nesteruk, Alexei 2012. The Origin of the Universe and Event of Birth: Phenomenological Parallels. *Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences* 2(5): 172–205.

- Nöth, Winfried 1988. The language of commodities: Groundwork for a semiotics of consumer goods. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol.4, Issue 3: 173–186.
- Nöth, Winfried 1995. *Handbook of semiotics*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Novichenko, Yulia 2010. Mifolohija masovoji kultury: svoboda, vybir, spozhivannia (Mythology of mass culture: freedom, choice, consumption). *Aktualni problem istoriji, teoriji ta praktyky hudozhnioji kultury*, 24: 148–151.
- Ojamaa, Maarja; Torop, Peeter 2015. Transmediality of cultural communication *International Journal of Cultural Studies* Vol. 18(1), 61–78.
- Ortega y Gasset, Jose 1991[1929–1930]. *Rebel of the masses*. Geleskula A. (transl.). Aesthetics. Philosophy of culture. Saint Petersburg: Art.
- Ortner, Sherry 1972. Is female to male as nature is to culture? *Feminist Studies*. 1 (2): 5–31.
- Oswald, Laura R. 2012. *Marketing semiotics. Signs, strategies, and brand value*. Oxford: University press.
- Oswald, Laura 2015. *Creating value. Theory and practice of marketing semiotics research*. Oxford: University press.
- O'Sullivan, Tom et al. 1994. *Key concepts in communication and cultural studies*. Second edition. London, New York: Routledge.
- Pattanaik, Devdutt 2006. *Myth = Mythya: a handbook of Hinsu mythology*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India.
- Pattanaik, Devdutt 2013. *Business Sutra. A very Indian approach to management*. New Delhi: Aleph Book.
- Pike, Kenneth L. 1967. *Language in relation to a unified theory of structure of human Behaviour*. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Rev. ed. The Hague: Mouton.
- Pivoev, Vasiliy 1991. *Mifologicheskoe soznanie kak sposob osvoeniya mira*. (Mythologic mind as a way of world cognition). Petrozavodsk: Karelia.
- Podol'skaja, Natalia 1978. *Slovar' russkoj onomasticheskoj terminologii* (Dictionary of Russian onomastic terminology). Moscow: Nauka.
- Polysaiev, Oleksandr 2008. *Arkhitektonika suchasnogo mifu*. (Arcitectonics of the contemporary myth). Ternopil': Aston.
- Polysaiev, Oleksandr 2009. *Social'no-filosofs'ke doslifzhennia transistorychnosti mifologichnoho osvoyennia svitu* (Social-philosophical scrutiny of transhistoricity of mythological familiarization of the world). PhD thesis (Social philosophy). Kyiv.
- Postovalova Valentina 1994. Sudba kak kliuchevoe slovo kultury i ego tolkovanie A.F.Losevym (fragment tipologii miroponimaniy). *Poniatie sudby v kontekste raznyh kultur*. Knyazevskaya (ed). Moscow: Nauka, 207–214.
- Potebnya, Oleksandr 1989[1862]. *Slovo i mif* (Word and myth). Moscow: Pravda.
- Propp, Vladimir 1928. *Morfologia skazki* (Morfology of the folk tale). Leningrad: Academia.
- Prosandeeva, Lyudmyla 2003. Masova kultura v konteksti sotsialnoji kultury (mass culture in the context of social culture). *Visnyk knyzhkovoji palaty* 4: 39–41.
- Ricoeur, Paul 1985. *Time and Narrative* vol 3. Trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1988.
- Ritzer, Georg 2004. *The Globalization of Nothing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. Tomlinson J.
- Ryzhova, Viktoriya 2014. Ideologema i mifologema kak pragmaticheskoe yadro vyskazyvaniya (On the ideologeme and mythologeme in pragmatic core of utterance).

- Vestnik Irkutskogo gosudarstvennogo lingvisticheskogo universiteta. Seria Filologija*. 1: 27–34.
- Salem, Harriet 2013. The Spectrum of Berehynia. *New Eastern Europe*. №3 (VIII): 50–60.
- Salvador, Pau 2011. *The myth of the natural in advertising*. Catalan Journal of Communication and Cultural Studies. Volume 3 Number 1. Pp.79–93.
- Samohvalova, Vera 2004. Massovyj chelovek i mify masskulta. In: Akopian, Karen; Zaharov, Aleksandr, Kagarlitskaia S. et al. *Massovaja kultura*. Moscow: Alfa-M; INFRA-M, 96–140.
- Sassatelli, Roberta 2007. *Consumer Culture: History, Culture And Politics*. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: SAGE.
- Saulenko, Lyudmyla 2001. *My Nash, My Novyj Mif Zbudujemo... Mifologemy Totalitarnoho Mystetstva* (We will our new myth construct... Mythologemes of totalitarian art). Odesa: Astroprynt.
- Saveljeva, Irina 2000. *Mass culture and popular culture within contemporary society: Communicative aspect*. PhD dissertation (Sociology). Kazan' State University, Kazan'.
- Saveljeva, Tatijana 2013. Mifologizatsija sobytija v aspekte bezopasnosti mediasredy (Mythologization of event in outlook of safety within mediasphere). *Vestnik Cheliabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* № 22 (313). Filologiya. Iskusstvovedenie. Vol. 81: 121–124.
- Scheid, John; Ortolì, Sven 2015. Au nom du père". *Philosophie Magazine*, Hors-série, No. 27, Octobre 2015. Paris: Philo Éditions SAS, 31–35.
- Schelling, Friedrich W. von. 1989[1842]. *Philosophy of Mythology (Lecture)*. Select works. Vol.2. Moscow: Idea.
- Schwab, Klaus 2016. *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*. World Economic Forum.
- Semenenko, Alexei 2012. *The texture of culture. An introduction to Yuri Lotman's semiotic theory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sergeeva, Elena 2007. Evoliutsija kontsepta-mifemy v Russkom jazykovom soznanii. *Collection of abstracts of Third International congress of researchers of Russian is "Russian: historical fates and contemporaneity"*. Electronic source. Accessed 18.11.2018: <http://www.philol.msu.ru/~rlc2007/pdf/16.pdf>
- Shuklin, Vladimir 2001. *Russkij mifologicheskij slovar* (Russian mythological dictionary). Ekaterinburg: Uralskoe izdatelstvo.
- Sokolov, Jevgenij 2007. Massovaja i nemassovaja kultura. In: *Kulturologija. Handbook*.
- Stupin, Sergej 2011. *Fenomen otkrytoj formy v iskusstve XX veka*. Moskva: Indrik.
- Tagg, Philip 2004. *Musical Meanings, Classical and Popular: The Case of Anguish* in *Enciclopedia della musica*, Jean-Jacques Nattiez (ed.), Turin.
- Tagg, Philip 2012. *Music's Meanings: a modern musicology for non-musos*. New York & Huddersfield: Mass Media Music Scholars' Press.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de 2000[1835–1840]. *Democracy in America*. Translated, edited, and with an introduction by Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop, The university of Chicago press, Chicago and London.
- Toporov, Vladimir 2010[1967]. K rekonstruktsii mifa o mirovom jajtste (na materiale russkikh skazok) (Towards reconstruction of the myth on world egg by example of Russian folk tales). In: *Mirovoe derevo: Universalnye znakovye komplekxy*. Moscow: Rukopisnye pamiatniki Drevnej Rusi, 390–407.

- Toporov, Vladimir 2010[1973]. “Mirovoe derevo”. Opyt semioticheskoj interpretatsii (World Tree. Attempt of semiotic interpretation). In: *Mirovoe derevo: Universalnye znakovye kompleksy*. Moscow: Rukopisnye pamiatniki Drevnej Rusi, 210–262.
- Torchinov, Evgenii 1998. *Religii mira: opyt zapredel'nogo* (Religions of the world: Experience of the transcendental). Saint-Petersburg: Tsentr “Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie”.
- Torop, Peeter 2005. Semiosphere and/as the research object of semiotics of culture. *Sign Systems Studies* 33 (1): 159–73.
- Tulchinskij, Grigorij 2011. Brendy kak mifologija sovremennogo massovogo obshestva. *Semiozis i kultura: ot realnosti k tekstu – ot teksta k realnosti*, №7: 189–200.
- Vagurina, Liudmila (comp.) 1998. *Slavianskaja mifologija. Slovar-spravochnik* (Slavic mythology. Dictionary). Moscow: Linor & Sovershenstvo.
- Valeeva, Lyudmyla 2011. Diskursivnye strategii mifemy (Discursive strategies of mytheme). *Visnyk Dnipropetrovs'kogo universytetu* (Bulletin of the Dnipropetrovs'k university) Vol.17, No11: 18–23.
- Valeeva, Liudmila; Petrunina, Aleksandra 2012. Sud'ba kak kontsept i mifema v tekstah mass-media (Fate as a concept and mythema in texts of mass-media). *Uchenye zapiski Tavricheskogo natsionalnogo universiteta im.V.I.Vernadskogo* 25(54) №1, part 2: 12–16.
- Van Leeuwen, Theo 2005. *Introducing social semiotics*. New York: Routledge.
- Vepreva Irina; Kupina, Nataliya 2014. The words of unrest in the world today: unofficial ethnonyms in real usage. *Politicheskaya lingvistika* 3: 43–50.
- Vorobjova, Lyudmila 2006. *Modernizm i postmodernizm v evoliutsii massovoj kultury: filosofskij analiz* (Modernism and postmodernism in evolution of mass culture: philosophical analysis). PhD thesis. Stavropol.
- Wolf, Naomi 2002[1990]. *The beauty myth: How images of beauty are used against women*. New York: HarperPerennial.
- Yurchak, Alexei 2015. Bodies of Lenin: The Hidden Science of Communist Sovereignty. *Representations*. Vol. 129. No 1, 116–157.
- Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2016. Mythologemes and Mythemes. Semiotic Markers of Myth in Contemporary Mass Culture. In: Rodriguez Higuera, Claudio Julio; Bennett, Tyler James (eds.), *Concepts for Semiotics*. (Tartu Semiotics Library 16.) Tartu: University of Tartu Press: 27–48.
- Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2018. Darth Vader in Ukraine: On the boundary between reality and mythology. *Semiotica. Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies* 221: 261–277.
- Zubko, Galina 2012. *Myth: outlook at the universe*. Moscow: Logos, 2012.
- Žižek, Slavoj 2005. *Interpassivnost'. Zhelanie: vlechenie. Multikulturalizm* (In. Smirnov, A. (transl), Mazin B, Rogonian G (eds.). Saint-Petersburg: Aleteja.

## SUMMARY

### STRUCTURAL UNITS OF MASS CULTURE MYTHOLOGY: A CULTURAL SEMIOTIC APPROACH

Our culture represents the whole of the integrity of the 40-thousands-years-old human semiosis. Generally speaking, the human world is *meaningful* by definition. Mass culture is a form of cultural development appearing together especially with industrial society. Despite it having appeared more than a century ago, it maintains its relevance nowadays and becomes a basis for new dimensions of culture (digital, transmedial, consumer culture). Within the framework of general emancipatory philosophical-anthropological perspective, mass culture appears as a semiotic space and meaningful environment. It is constituted by diversity of commodities, services and facilities of their production, as well as daily and regular social practices, which become possible in relation to them, and consequently create a certain way of life of a modern human being. The heuristic idea of J.Lotman to consider culture as a semiosphere provides an important perspective to understand mass culture as a subsystem of the entire semiosphere. From this perspective, mass culture may be seen as a semiosphere with a peculiar inner organization.

The present dissertation provides an account to consider mass culture mythology as an inner secondary-modelling system, a mechanism of organization of mass culture texts into a consistent system. Due to the mythological mechanism, the mosaic discrete environment becomes a meaningful continual world similar to ancient mythological system full of existential values, which are comprehensible to everyone.

The First Chapter dwells upon the ontology of mass culture mythology in detail. Myth is regarded as universal of culture preserving own nature along the whole history of mankind. Myth universally reflects ways of experiencing world and individual's presence. Universal of myth is a result of mythological mind which is a peculiar human cognitive aptitude situated on a verge between intuition and rational awareness of the world and leading to continual type of reality perception. It helps human being to overcome existential discrepancies of the opposition individual vs. nature and facilitates choices in overwhelming environment of competing meanings where discrete/discontinuous perception is impeded. The main function of myth is to decrease entropy by reconciling individual with reality and to preserve a comprehensible model of universe for human being. As a cultural form, myth is represented by mythological texts such as narratives, images, and symbols. Mass cultural mythology is a specific research object in marketing semiotics industry. Thus, the ontology of mass culture mythology, deriving from treatment of myth as cultural universal, can be deduced as a principle of organization and structuring of mass culture in integral semiosphere. Those principles reveal themselves in the four main ontological aspects of mass culture mythology: peculiar reason-consequential



linkage, anthropocentricity, specific mythological chronotope and “naming” as habitualization).

The Second Chapter is dedicated to epistemology of mass culture mythology. It is discussed that myth can be grasped through consistent mechanism of structural units which are mythemes and mythologemes. Those smallest units of myth derived from ancient texts and acquire certain contemporary forms within mass culture narrative preserving their consistency. I proceed from the findings of Lévi-Strauss, Jung and Kerenyi, concerning the smallest structural units of myth, which are mythemes and mythologemes, to trace their manifestations within linguistics, ethnography, literature, political and culture studies, and develop their application to mass culture narratives expressing mythological mind. All mythologemes and mythemes cannot be entirely grasped as discrete elements. Rather, they are quasi-discrete units revealing themselves from syntagmatic relations, whereas they depend on context and their discreteness is occurring at the paradigmatic level of texts. Mythologeme and mytheme appear as emic and hybrid structural units respectively, though, mytheme can also be regarded as an invariant structure. To consider mythemes as invariants I used a complementary method of *Weltanschauung* Categories of Ultimate Bases.

I define mythologemes as universal invariants-kernels of mythological narrative expressing the universal ideas of a human being presence in the world, which help people to fill the gap between empirical reality and inexplicable phenomena. They can appear as actants within narrative. Mythemes, in my point of view, are invariant structural units deployed in mythological narrative resembling recurring motifemes that articulate their own entity in dynamics and development. In other words, mythologemes are paradigmatic invariants and mythemes are syntagmatic invariants. In ancient times their function was organizing beliefs about environment, their preservation and transmission in integral comprehensible form. Unlike ancient times when smallest units of myth were gathered within strong mythological systems of different local cultures, now they are splitted across different genres of global cultural texts and different fields: popular science, arts, advertising etc. To all appearances, in acquiring peculiar modes, mythologemes and mythemes preserve sustainability within mass culture discourse, they refer to universal human senses, and could be seen as semiotic markers of myth in daily narratives.

The presence of smallest mythological units in culture enables mechanism of translation of cultural texts synchronically and diachronically. As cultural universals, mythological elements “gravitate” towards the centre (bottom) of entire semiosphere, where they are concentrated in the most ancient, the most famous texts throughout entire history. At the same time, due to their simple form, they permeate all culture and help to contemporary texts of culture to acquire similarity to the most famous and commonly known and thus to move from the periphery to the center of semiosphere. In this way smallest mythological units trace the dialectics of semiosis in culture as permanent rotation of cultural forms. From another side, mythologemes and mythemes can be used in purpose in mass culture texts as they easily trigger mythological mind of the audience.

They might become usually anchors of existential-mythological valorization during the process of choice between competing narratives. This reveals in marketing perspective during the process of decommo-ditization, which is a symbolic aspect of appropriation process of mass cultural goods.

Mythologemes and mythemes are dissipated and noticed by consumers during the process of decommo-ditization, which is a symbolic aspect of appropriation process of mass cultural goods. The decommo-ditization phenomenon means that goods and events transform their familiar meaning and utilitarian value to a unique subjective meaning and existential value for every single consumer depending on his or her anticipation. From a philosophical-anthropological point of view, this shift often means activation of the mythological mind of the consumers; in this case, structural units of mass culture mythology attract attention of consumers to those narratives. Very often it is the most significant possibility to become meaningful in diverse environment of different cultural texts due to existential-mythological valorization. I follow Lotman's insight that myth becomes actual as autocommunication, so it says about listeners and organizes their world. It reveals as an aspiration of valorization that is possible to describe by Greimasian actantial model. The latter becomes a heuristic algorithm of mythologemes determination within mass culture narrative. Additionally I apply the *Weltanschauung* Categories of Ultimate Bases for structural analysis of mytheme.

In research I discussed upon several instances of the structural units of myth which are commonly present in mass cultural texts. I regarded mythologemes of Fate, Course, Universe, Catastrophe, Golden Age, and Mother Nature. Also I considered two universal ontological mythemes of Transformation and Back-tracking.

I ascertained that mythologemes can either play a specific actantial role within a narrative (the Fate, the Course, and the Mother Nature) or describe mythological chronotope (the Universe, the Catastrophe, and the Golden Age). In their turn, mythemes reveal an inner strategy of unrolling mythological narrative frontwards or backwards. Deriving from texts of culture mythologemes and mythemes become a bridge between empirical reality and coherent world picture. They help to decrease existential anxiety of human being on the world finding tangible form to explain fear, justice/injustice, birth and death, time, transformation etc.

The mythologemes of Fate and Course fully reflect upon one of the main functions of myth, which is to grasp life as an integral whole. They emerge from the justice/injustice opposition, which is one of the most important semes penetrating mass culture discourse and one that hides behind the existential valorization and hence its mythological aspect. Justice or injustice often acquire a strong meaning of an independent, integral actant, which is capable of influencing the Subject within a narrative and, what is even more, to exist beyond the artistic text in real life, which is a strong marker of mythological mind. Those two mythologemes can be associated with an anthropogenic genre of myth so far as they explain personal life within autocommunication process.

Mythologeme of Fate can be and Adjutant or Adversary within mythological narrative, mythologeme of Course appears as an Adjutant or an Object. They always relate to the search of Subject for a purpose of life and own existential way.

The mythologemes of Universe, Catastrophe and Golden Age express an archaic desire to grasp the world in its complexity and to find out its origin in categories of mythological mind. They represent the time-space of mass culture mythological narrative. Thus, the mythologeme of Universe has an existential meaning of integration of mass culture heterotopic picture of the world in present implying intercommunication with past and future and appears as an Object within narrative. Similarly to the archaic world picture in which the Universe loci used to intercommunicate via World Tree, the uniting mythological principal in the contemporary mass culture is a symbol of a window connecting, time and spaces, cultures, extraterrestrial worlds, and different types of everyday reality, i.e. physical and cyber reality, empirical and spiritual reality.

The mythologeme of Catastrophe unlike its archaic counterpart – the mythologeme of Flood – relates to future and does not describe past events. It works as a transformation point from existential fear of unpredictable future into calm and reassurance. It relates to the cosmogonic topic as well as it plays for preservation of the universe model embodied in the image of community (whole of the mankind). It plays role of an Adversary within narrative. It is also tightly intertwined with Christian discourse and more precise with eschatological ontology. In mass culture the role of an Antichrist (as an evident marker of the End of the World narrative) is ascribed to leaders of society or to societies themselves, which are the most odious.

The mythologeme of Golden Age alludes to the universal idea of Eutopia (Dreamland) situated in a forever bygone era (always in the past) that in mass culture is associated with the subject of childhood. It can appear as an Object or an Adversary within narrative. Thus, three of those mythologemes constitute an integral triad of time and space of the world (past-present-future) and reflect upon human existential quest for integral explanation of the world, nostalgia for the past and fears towards the future.

The mythologeme of Mother Nature relates to the existential search for inner authenticity and identity. Despite the feminist turn in contemporary mass culture discourse, this mythologeme unveils itself through the key opposition between culture (technology)/nature. It can take a form of an implicit idea represented by local traditional symbols, images, characters within general mass culture discourse, or this mythologeme can also take shape of an actant (Adjutant or Adversary) within narrative.

Meanwhile Greimasian actantial model shows relations between actants within either fictional/reflected narrative or factual reality, it is remarkable that mythological mind makes those realities to merge. In some cases (when Subject is a real person) it might appear that a real person acts together (being helped or opposed) with mythologeme as an Adjutant (Fate or Mother Nature mythologeme, for example).

The mytheme of Transformation, or Miracle, and the mytheme of Backtracking, are universal ontological mythemes exhibiting ideas about natural phenomena in culture and revealing them in mass culture texts. It is possible to examine them via the *Weltanschauung* Categories of Ultimate Bases, which demonstrates an inner process of negotiation and overcoming of life-death existential bases as discrete constituents of the mythemes. The mytheme of Transformation lays itself bare as an inner schema of mythological narrative about miracle, the mytheme of Backtracking reveals itself as a schema of “unwrapping the bygone past” and returning to mastered time and space and thereby constituting the center of semiosphere for a subject.

The smallest units of myth can be classified by different criteria. I classified them by their structural principle: the emic units (mythologemes) and the ones possessing hybrid structure (mythemes). It is also possible to classify the emic units by their subjects by way of analogy with ancient myths: cosmogonic, anthropogonic, and structuring social semiosphere. Cosmogonic mythologemes appear in the narratives about Universe and models of time and space and their origin. Those are the mythologeme of Universe, the mythologeme of Catastrophe and the mythologeme of Golden Age. Anthropogonic mythologemes are related to individuals' life and its structure: the mythologeme of Fate and the mythologeme of Course. The mythologemes structuring social semiosphere through the quest of identity appear within mass culture narratives about collective memory (the Mother Nature mythologeme).

The Third Chapter exemplifies the process of finding more minimal units of myth in cultural texts of different genres. The first case was dedicated to close analysis of the television communication of the Ukrainian politician Darth Vader. I analyzed how communication of the politician involved important transmitters of mythological images for Ukrainian culture. I found out that his narrative was full of combinations of polar meanings discovering mythological dimension of the message. Two main protagonists of the communication were agents of two separate mythological generations: archaic mythology (Mother Nature) and contemporary mass culture mythology (Darth Vader). Among other structural units there were the Eutopia/Garden, the Trickster, and the Death. What is more some of those archaic mythologemes acquired new form within the text, in this way trickster appeared in image of Darth Vader and Eutopia in an image of the Internet Party. By combination of archaic meanings and contemporary forms the narrative became semiotically saturated and producing new powerful connotations. This case showed how a significant trickster's image of mass culture became a bridge between mythological mind, mass culture, and political discourse.

As well, I demonstrated an applied case from my practice where I used the Mother Nature mythologeme as a branding tool. Semiotic analysis helped me to trace a problem of an artistic image disintegration and to find out a gap between forms of expression and values of the artist's brand. Mapping the territories of the singer images, I discovered that her personal values and her authentic vocal persona clearly tend to the female image represented in culture by Mother

Nature mythologeme most clearly. Demonstration of different cultural forms of the mythologeme helped to start building a coherent narrative around an artist's brand and to select precise image corresponding to her inner identity (tone of voice of the brands, costumes and visual media representations etc.). In this case the mythologeme helped to articulate inner brand identity with appropriate forms of expression relevant to wide mass culture context and, thus, comprehensible to mass audience.

The Conclusions Section points out a potential of the further exploration of the mythologemes and mythemes in mass cultural texts for understanding human mind and culture better and for applied marketing purposes. The extension of the structural units of myth collection can provide with increase of tools for building coherent marketing messages.

## SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

### MASSIKULTUURI MÜTOLOOGIA STRUKTUURIÜHIKUD: KULTUURISEMIOOTILINE LÄHENEMINE

Inim maailm on olemuslikult tähenduslik ning kultuur kannab endas inimsemioosi ajalugu. Kultuurilise arengu vormina ilmneb massikultuur industriaalses ühiskonnas. Tekkinud sajandite eest, on massikultuur tänapäevalgi oluline ning saab aluseks kultuuri uuele mõõtmele – digitaalsele, transmeedialisele tarbimiskultuurile. Üldises filosoofilis-antropoloogilises vaates ilmneb massikultuur semiootilise ruumi ja tähendusliku keskkonnana. See koosneb teenuste ja tarbeasjade ning nende tootmisvahendite mitmekesisusest, samuti igapäevastest ja regulaarsetest praktikatest, mis nendega seoses võimalikuks saavad ja loovad seekaudu tänapäevase inimese eluviisi. Juri Lotmani heuristiline käsitlus kultuurist semiosfäärina pakub võimaluse mõista massikultuuri kogu semiosfääri allsüsteemina. Sellest vaatepunktist võib massikultuuri ennast näha (all)semiosfäärina, mis evib erilist sisekorrastust.

Käesolev dissertatsioon uurib massikultuuri mütooloogiat teisese modelleerimissüsteemina, massikultuuri tekste ühtseks süsteemiks korrastava mehhanismina. Tänu mütooloogilisele mehhanismile saab diskreetsuste mosaiiksest keskkonnast tähenduslik kontinuaalne maailm, sarnane eksistentsiaalseid tähendusi täis ja kõigile mõistetava arhailise mütooloogiasüsteemiga.

Töö esimeses peatükis käsitlen detailselt massikultuuri mütoologia ontoloogiat. Müüti vaatlen kultuuriuniversaalina, mis säilitab oma olemuse kogu inimajaloo vältel. Müüt peegeldab alati maailma kogemise viise ja indiviidi kohalolu. Müüdi universaalsus lähtub mütooloogilisest mõistusest, mis on eriline inimtunnetuse viis intuitsiooni ja maailmast ratsionaalselt teadlik-olemise piiril, ning viib tegelikkuse tajumise kontinuaalse tüübi juurde. See aitab ületada indiviidi ja looduse vastanduse eksistentsiaalseid vastuolusid ning võimaldab valikuid võistlevate tähenduste üleküllastunud keskkonnas, kus diskreetne taju on takistatud. Müüdi peamine funktsioon on entroopia vähendamine indiviidi reaalsusega sobitamise kaudu ja hoomatava universumimudeli võimaldamine. Kultuurilise vormina on müüt esitatud tekstides nagu narratiivid, kujundid ja sümbolid. Massikultuuriline mütoologia on omaette uurimisobjektiks ka turundussemiotika valdkonnas. Massikultuurimütoologia ontoloogilist mudelit, müüdi käsitlemisest kultuuriuniversaalina, võib niisiis käsitleda kui massikultuuri korrastamise põhimõtteid laiemas semiosfääris. Need põhimõtted ilmnevad massikultuurimütoologia neljas aspektis: eriline põhjus-tagajärg suhe, antropotsentrism, eriline mütooloogiline kronotoop ja „nimetamine“ kui harjumuspärasustamine.

Teine peatükk on pühendatud massikultuurimütoologia epistemoloogiale. Müüti saab haarata kestva struktuurilise mehhanismi kaudu või kestvate struktuuriliste ühikute, müteemide ja mütoologeemide, kaudu. Need müüdi väikseimad ühikud on kestvad, kuna nad lähtuvad iidsetest tekstidest ja omandavad massikultuuri narratiivides tänapäevaseid vorme, samas oma olemust säilitades.

Müütide ja mütologeemide kui müüdi vähimate ühikute mõtestamisel Lévi-Straussi, Jungi ja Kerenyi töid aluseks võttes jälgin nende teostumist lingvistikas, etnograafias, kirjanduses, poliitikas ja kultuuriuuringutes ning arendan nende rakendamist mütoloogilist mõtlemist väljendavatele massikultuuri narratiividele. Kõiki mütologeeme ja müteeme ei saa täielikult mõista diskreetsete elementidena. Pigem on tegu kvaasi-diskreetsete ühikutega, mis avaldavad end süntagmaatilistes suhetes, kuivõrd nad sõltuvad kontekstist ja nende diskreetsus leiab aset tekstide paradigmaatilisel tasandil. Mütologeemid ja müteemid ilmnevad vastavalt eemiliste ja hübriidsete struktuurilistena, ent müteemi võib pidada ka invariantseks struktuuriks. Müteemi invariandina käsitlemiseks rakendasin täiendava metodoloogilise vahendina maailmapildi aluskategooriaid (*Weltanschauung Categories of Ultimate Bases*).

Määratlen mütologeeme mütoloogilise narratiivi püsivate ja universaalsete invariant-tuumadena, mis väljendavad üldist mõtet inimese maailmas olemisest ning mis aitavad täita empiirilise tegelikkuse ja seletamatute nähtuste vahelist tühimikku. Mütologeemid võivad narratiivides olla aktantideks. Müteemid on minu vaates mütoloogilise narratiivi invariantseid struktuuriühikud, mis sarnanevad oma terviklikkust artikuleerivate korduvate motiividega. Teisisõnu, mütologeemid on paradigmaatilised esindajad ja müteemid on süntagmaatilised invariantid. Ajalooliselt on nende funktsiooniks olnud keskkonda puudutavate uskumuste korrastamine, säilitamine ja edastamine sidusas mõistetavas vormis. Erinevalt varasemast, mil müüdi väikseimad osad olid koondatud kohalike kultuuride tugevatesse mütoloogilistesse süsteemidesse, on nad tänapäeval jagatud globaalkultuuri tekstide žanritesse ja valdkondadesse nagu populaarteadus, kunstid, reklaam jne. Üldinimlikele tähendustele viidates on mütologeemid ja müteemid massikultuurilises diskursuses püsivad ning neid võib näha müütide semiootiliste markeritena argistes narratiivides.

Vähimate mütoloogiliste ühikute kohalolu võimaldab kultuuritekstide tõlke-mehhanismi sünkroonselt ja diakroonselt. Püsivate kultuuriuniversaalidena tõmbuvad mütoloogilised elemendid semiosfääri keskmesse, kus nad koonduvad kõige iidsematesse ja kuulsamatesse tekstidesse. Tänu oma lihtsale vormile läbivad nad samas kogu kultuuri ja aitavad tänapäevastel tekstidel sarnaneda kuulsaimate ja tuntuimate tekstidega ning seega liikuda semiosfääri perifeeriast keskmesse. Nii järgivad vähimad ühikud kultuuri semioosi dialektikat kui kultuurivormide püsivat ringlemist. Teisalt, kuna mütologeemid ja müteemid haaravad kergesti auditooriumi mütoloogilist mõtlemist, saab massikultuuri tekstides neid sihilikult ära kasutada. Võistlevate narratiivide valiku protsessis saavad neist eksistentsiaal-mütoloogilise väärtustamise ankrud.

Turunduse valdkonnas levivad ja tunnevad tarbijad mütologeeme ja müteeme ära sürd-tarbekaubastumise (*decommoditization*) protsessis, mis on massikultuuri kaupade omaksvõtu sümboliline aspekt. Sürd-tarbekaubastumine osutab sellele, kuidas kaupade ja sündmuste tavalised tähendused ja utilitaarne väärtus muunduvad unikaalseks isiklikuks tähenduseks ja eksistentsiaalseks väärtuseks vastavalt iga üksiku tarbija ootustele. Filosoofilis-antropoloogilisest vaatepunktist ilmneb see sageli tarbija mütoloogilise mõtlemise aktiveeru-

misena, mispuhul tõmbavad massikultuuri mütoloogia struktuuralsed ühikud tarbijate tähelepanu mütoloogilistele narratiividele; Lotmani järgi aktualiseerub müüt aga autokommunikatsioonina ning kõneleb seetõttu kuulajate endi maailmast. Sageli peitub siin parim võimalus saada kultuuritekstide küllastunud keskkonnas tähenduslikuks eksistentsiaal-mütoloogilise väärtustamise kaudu. Seda väärtustamist saab kirjeldada Greimase aktant-mudeli kaudu ning viimastest saab heuristiline algoritm massikultuuri narratiivide determineerimise kohta; selle kõrval rakendad müteemide struktuuralse analüüsi metodoloogilise vahendina maailmapildi aluskategooriaid.

Töös käsitlesin mitmeid juhtumeid müüdi püsivatest struktuuriühikutest, mis sageli massikultuuri tekstides esinevad. Uurisin *saatuse, kulu, kõiksuse, katastroofi, kuldajastu* ja *emakese looduse* mütologeeme. Samuti vaatlesin kaht universaalset ontoloogilist müteemi: *muundumise* ja *kordumise* müteemi.

Näitan, et mütologeemid võivad narratiivis olla konkreetse aktant-rollis (saatus, kulg, emake loodus) või esitada mütoloogilist kronotoopi (kõiksuse, katastroof, kuldajastu). Müteemides omakorda peitub strateegia mütoloogilise narratiivi edas- või päraspidi lahti rullimiseks. Kultuuritekstidest lähtuvana on mütologeemid ja müteemid sillaks empiirilise tegelikkuse ja sidusa maailmapildi vahel. Pakkudes käegakatsutavat vormi hirmu, õigluse ja ebaõigluse, sünni ja surma, aja ning muutuste seletamiseks, aitavad nad vähendada inimese maailmasolemise eksistentsiaalset ängi.

Saatuse ja kulu müteemid tegelevad müütide ühe peamise funktsiooniga – elu terviklikkuse hoomamisega. Nad ilmnevad õigluse-ebaõigluse vastandusest – ühest tähtsaimast seemidest massikultuuri diskursusest, mis mütologiseerub varjumise kaudu eksistentsiaalse väärtustamise taha. Õigus ja ebaõigus omandavad sageli iseseisva tegutseja tähenduse ja on sellisena võimelised mõjutama narratiivi subjekti. Enamgi veel, mütoloogilise mõtlemise eripärana saavad nad sellisena eksisteerida ka väljaspool kunstiteksti tegelikus elus. Niivõrd kuivõrd need kaks mütologeemi seletavad autokommunikatiivselt isiklikku elu, võib neid siduda inimese algupära selgitava müüdižanriga. Saatuse mütologeem võib mütoloogilises narratiivis olla *abistaja* või *vastane*, kulu mütologeem ilmneb aga *abistaja* või *objektina*. Nad suhestuvad alati *subjekti* elu mõtte ja „oma tee“ otsingutega.

Kõiksuse, katastroofi ja kuldajastu mütologeemid väljendavad arhailist soovi haarata maailma selle keerukuses ja mõista maailma algupära mütoloogilise mõtlemise kategooriates. Need mütologeemid väljendavad massikultuuri mütoloogilise narratiivi aegruumi. Kõiksuse mütologeem ilmneb narratiivis *objektina* ning tema eksistentsiaalseks tähenduseks on niisiis massikultuuri mitmekesise maailmapildi olevikuline lõimimine koos suhestumisega minevikku ja tulevikku. Sarnaselt arhailise maailmapildiga, kus *ilmapuu* esitas suhteid kõiksuses, on tänapäevases massikultuuris ühendavaks mütoloogiliseks elemendiks akna sümbol, mis ühendab aja ja ruumi, kultuure, Maa-väliseid maailmu ning argitegelikkuse eri tüüpe, näiteks küberreaalsust, empiirilist ja vaimset tegelikkust.

Erinevalt oma arhailisest vormist, uputuse mütologeemist, on katastroofi mütologeem seotud tulevikuga ning ei kirjelda minevikusündmusi. See toimib



muundumishetkena ennustamatuse eksistentsiaalsest hirmust rahuks ja kindluseks. Kosmogoonilise temaatikaga seostudes säilitab ta ka kõiksuse mudelit, mis on kätketud kujutelma kogukonnast (ja kogu inimkonnast). Narratiivis on tal *vastase* roll. Katastroofi mütologeem on tihedalt seotud ka kristliku diskursuse ning eriti eshatoloogilise ontoloogiaga. Massikultuuris on Antikristuse kuju omistatud kõige põlastusväärsematele liidritele või tervetele ühiskondadele.

Möödunud ajas asuva eutoopia (alati minevikulise unistustemaa) universaalsele ideele viitav kuldajastu mütologeem on massikultuuris seotud lapsepõlve teemaga. Narratiivis võib see olla *objektiks* või *vastaseks*. Kolm mütologeemi – kõiksuse, katastroofi ja kuldajastu – moodustavad niisiis maailma aegruumilise kolmiku, minevik-olevik-tulevik. Need tegelevad eksistentsiaalse otsinguga maailma tervikliku seletuse järele, samuti minevikunostalgia ja tulevikuhirmuga.

Emakese looduse mütologeem on seotud sisemise autentsuse ja identiteedi eksistentsiaalse otsinguga. Vaatamata tänapäevase massikultuuri diskursuse feministlikule pöördele avaldub see mütologeem peamiselt läbi kultuuri (tehnoloogia) ja looduse vastanduse. See mütologeem võib avalduda kohalike traditsiooniliste sümbolite, kujundite ja tegelaste näol üldises massikultuuridiskursuses või aktandina (*abistaja* või *vastane*) narratiivis.

On tähelepanuväärne, et kui Greimase aktant-mudel näitab aktantidevahelisi suhteid kas fiktsionaalses narratiivis või faktilises tegelikkuses, siis mütoloogiline mõtlemine ühendab need reaalsused. Mõnel juhul, kui *subjekt* on tegelik isik, võib juhtuda, et tegelik isik tegutseb, abistatu või vastandatuna koos mütologeemi kui *abistajaga* (näiteks saatuse või emakese looduse mütologeemiga).

Muundumise ehk ime ja tagasipöördumise müteemid on universaalsed ontoloogilised müteemid, mis väljendavad loomuomaseid nähtusi kultuuris ja osutavad neile massikultuuri tekstides. Neid saab analüüsida maailmapildi aluskategooriate abil ja seekaudu näidata elu-surma käsitlemise ja ületamise protsessi kui müteemide diskreetseid osiseid. Muundumise müteem on mütoloogilise narratiivi sisemine skeem imede kohta; tagasipöördumise müteem on skeem „mineviku lahtirullimisest“ ja pöördumine kontrollitud aja ja ruumi juurde, miskaudu määratleb see semiosfääri keskme subjekti jaoks.

Müteemi vähimaid ühikuid saab klassifitseerida eri alustel. Lähtusin nende struktuuralsest põhimõttest: eemilised ühikud, mütologeemid, ja hübriidse struktuuriga, müteemid. Analoogselt arhailiste müütidega saab eemilisi ühikud klassifitseerida ka nende teema järgi: kosmogooniline, antropogooniline ning sotsiaalset semiosfääri korrastav. Kosmogoonilisi mütologeeme võib leida universumi, aja- ja ruumimudelite ning nende tekke kohta käiavates narratiivides. Need on kõiksuse, katastroofi ja kuldajastu mütologeemid. Antropogoonilised mütologeemid on seotud üksikisiku elu ja selle struktuuriga – saatuse ja kulu mütologeemid. Mütologeemid, mis korrastavad identiteediotsingu kaudu sotsiaalset semiosfääri, ilmnevad kollektiivse mäluga tegelevates massikultuuri narratiivides (emakese looduse mütologeem).

Kolmandas peatükis näitlikustan protsessi, kuidas leida müüdi vähimaid ühikuid eri žanrite kultuuritekstidest. Esimene juhtum on pühendatud Ukraina poliitiku Darth Vaderi televisioonisuhtluse lähianalüüsile. Uurisin, kuidas poliitiku suhtlus sisaldas ukraina kultuuri jaoks oluliste mütoloogiliste kujundite edastajaid. Leidsin, et tema narratiiv oli täis polaarseste tähenduste kombinatsioone, mis näitasid sõnumi mütoloogilist mõõdet. Kommunikatsiooni kaks peamist *abistajat* olid tegelased kahest erinevast mütoloogilisest põlvkonnast, arhailisest mütoloogiast (emake loodus) ja tänapäevasest massikultuuri mütoloogiast (Darth Vader). Teistest struktuurasetest ühikutest esines veel eutoopia/aed, trikster ja surm. Enamgi veel, mõned neist arhailistest mütologeemidest said tekstis uue vormi – trikster ilmes Darth Vaderi kujundis, utoopia Internetipartei kujundis. Kombineerides arhailisi tähendusi ja nüüdisaegseid vorme, on narratiiv semiootiliselt küllastunud ja toodab uusi võimsaid konnotatsioone. See analüüs näitas, kuidas massikultuuri tähendusliku triksteri kujund sai sillaks mütoloogilise mõtlemise, massikultuuri ja poliitilise diskursuse vahel.

Teiseks rakenduslikuks liiniks oli juhtum minu enda turundussemiootilisest praksisest, milles kasutasin emakese looduse mütologeemi kaubamärgiarenduse tööriistana. Semiootiline analüüs võimaldas mul avastada sidususeprobleemi kunstilises kujundis ning lüngad väljenduse vormide ja kunstniku kaubamärgi vahel. Kaardistades lauljakuvandite territooriume leidsin, et selle artisti isiklikud väärtused ja talle omane vokaal-tegelane haakuvad naistegelaskujuga, mida kultuuris esindab kõige selgemalt emakese looduse mütologeem. Selle mütologeemi eri vormide välja toomine aitas algselt sidusa narratiivi loomise ümber laulja kaubamärgi ning aitas valida täpse kuvand, mis vastaks tema sise-  
misele identiteedile (sh kaubamärkide hääletoonid, kostüümid ja visuaalsed meediaesitused jne). Selle juhtumi juures andis mütologeem võimaluse artikleerida kaubamärgi sisemist identiteeti sobilike väljendusvahenditega, mis oleksid asjakohased laiemas massikultuuri kontekstis ja seekaudu mõistetavad massiauditooriumile.

Töö kokkuvõttes osutan massikultuuritekstide mütologeemide ja müteemide uurimise võimalikule laiemale panusele inimtõlgemise ja kultuuri mõistmisel, ent ka rakendusliku turunduse valdkonnas. Müütide struktuurasete ühikute laiendamine võiks anda töövahendeid sidusate turundussõnumite loomiseks.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

**Name:** Lyudmyla Zaporozhtseva  
**Date of birth:** February 28, 1988  
**Citizenship:** Ukrainian  
**E-mail:** lyudmylazaporozhtseva@gmail.com  
**Address:** University of Tartu, Department of Semiotics,  
Jakobi 2, Tartu, 51014  
**Place of work:** Enjoy Understanding marketing research agency (Moscow)  
**Position:** Head of Semiotic Research

### Education:

2016–2019 University of Tartu, Doctoral studies, Semiotics and Culture Studies  
2014–2016 University of Tartu, visiting Doctoral studies, Semiotics and Culture Studies  
2012–2016 National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Doctoral studies, Philosophical Anthropology and Philosophy of Culture  
2010–2012 National Academy of Internal Affairs (Kyiv), Master of Laws (Civil Law, *cum laude*). Dissertation: *Mythology as a Phenomenon of Juridical Reality*  
2011–2012 Odessa I.I.Mechnikov National University, Master of Arts (Culture Studies, *cum laude*)  
2007–2011 Odessa A.V. Nezhdanova National Academy of Music, Bachelor of Arts (Theory of Music and Culture, *cum laude*)  
2005–2010 Odessa State Institute of Internal Affairs, Bachelor of Laws (*cum laude*)  
2003–2007 Odessa K.F.Dankevich College of Arts and Culture, secondary professional education (Theory of Music, *cum laude*)

**Languages:** Russian (native), Ukrainian (native), English (C1), French (B1), German (B1), Greek (B1)

### Career:

2018–... Enjoy Understanding marketing research agency (Moscow), Head of Semiotic Research  
2017 Feb.–2017 Nov. Kosmos strategic agency (Moscow), Course designer, lecturer and trainer of Marketing Semiotics business course  
2016 July–Oct. GfK (Kyiv), Qualitative research department, Researcher  
2015 Sep.– 2016 June Program Coordinator in Organizing Committee of Semiofest-2016 in Tallinn

2012–2014	National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Doctoral school
2010–2012	Odessa A.V.Nezhdanova State music academy, Department of culture studies, Secretary and Assistant of Professor (0,25)
2009 Nov.	Odessa Regional State Administration, Department of Culture, Internship

### **Research interests**

Culture semiotics, marketing semiotics, semiotics of myth, philosophical anthropology, semiotics of branding, semiotics of mass culture, consumer culture, mass culture mythology, mythology of law, history of music.

### **Major publications**

- Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2018. Darth Vader in Ukraine: On the boundary between reality and mythology. *Semiotica. Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies* 221: 261–277.
- Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2016. Review of “Morenets Volodymyr, ed. 2014. Tertium Non Datur. Issue Of Cultural Identity Within Literature And Philosophical Discourse of 19th–21st c.”. *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal* 3: 223–225.
- Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2016. Mythologemes and Mythemes. Semiotic Markers of Myth in Contemporary Mass Culture. In: Rodriguez Higuera, Claudio Julio; Bennett, Tyler James (eds.), *Concepts for Semiotics*. (Tartu Semiotics Library 16.) Tartu: University of Tartu Press: 27–48.
- Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2014. Tsyfrovyyi vymir masovoyi kultury yak sere-dovyshe konstruivannya mifologii (Digital dimension of mass culture as the environment for mythology construction). *Magisterium* 55: 48–54.
- Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2013. Mif u masovij kulturi i pravovij realnosti: pytannya spivvidnoshennia (Myth in mass culture and legal reality: the issue of correlation). *Naukovi Zapysky NaUKMA* 141: 18–22.
- Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2013. Otnoshenije k zakonu (povedencheskoj norme) v talmudicheskoi culture v sravnenii s khristianstvom (Attitude to law (rule of conduct) in Talmudic literature in comparison to Christianity). *Judaica v Odessa (Hebrew Studies in Odessa)* 3: 97–105.
- Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2012. Pravova mifologia yak javyshe pravovoji dijsnosti (The Mythology of Law As A Legal Reality Phenomenon, Its Essence And Features). *Philosophical And Methodological Problems of Law* 4(2): 60–71.
- Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2012. Pravovyi hronotop yak ontologichna determinanta aktyvatsii pravovoho mifu (Legal “Space-Time” as an ontological determinant of legal myth activation). *Academy of Advocacy Journal* 15(2).

**Scholarships and grants**

- 2014–2015 Archimedes Foundation, Intergovernmental Bilateral Agreement  
Scholarship
- 2015 DoRa5, Scholarship for short term Ph.D Students

## ELULOOKIRJELDUS

**Nimi:** Lyudmyla Zaporozhtseva  
**Sünniaeg:** 28. veebruar 1988 Odessa, Ukraina  
**Kodakondsus:** Ukraina  
**E-post:** lyudmylazaporozhtseva@gmail.com  
**Aadress:** Tartu Ülikool, Semiootika osakond, Jakobi 2, Tartu, 51005  
**Praegune töökoht:** Enjoy Understanding Marketing Research Agency  
**Amet:** semiootika uuringute osakonna juht

### Hariduskäik:

2016–2019 Tartu Ülikool, doktorantuur, Semiootika ja kultuuriteooria  
2014–2016 Tartu Ülikool, külalisüliõpilasena doktorantuuris, Semiootika ja kultuuriteooria  
2012–2016 National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, doktorantuur, Filosoofiline antropoloogia ja kultuurifilosoofia  
2010–2012 National Academy of Internal Affairs (Kiiev), õigusteaduse magister *cum laude*  
2011–2012 Odessa I.I.Mechnikov National University, kultuuriteaduste magister *cum laude*  
2007–2011 Odessa A.V. Nezhdanova National Academy of Music, muusikakultuuri uuringud bakalaureus *cum laude*  
2005–2010 Odessa State Institute of Internal Affairs, õigusteaduse bakalaureus *cum laude*  
2003–2007 Odessa K.F.Dankevich College of Arts and Culture, keskeriharidus muusikateoorias *cum laude*

**Keelteoskus:** vene (natiivne), ukraina (natiivne), inglise (C1), prantsuse (B1), saksa (B1), kreeka (B1)

### Teenistuskäik

2018–... Enjoy Understanding Marketing Research Agency (Moskva), semiootika uuringute osakonna juht  
2017 veebr–nov Kosmos Strategic Agency (Moskva), turundussemiootika kursuse looja ja koolitaja  
2016 juuli–okt GfK (Kiev), kvalitatiivsete uuringute osakond, teadur  
2015 sept–2016 juuni Semiofest 2016 Tallinn, programmikomitee juht  
2012–2014 National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, doktorikool  
2010–2012 Odessa A.V.Nezhdanova State Music Academy, kultuuriuuringute osakonna sekretär ja õppeassistent (0,25)  
2009 november Odessa oblastivalitsuse kultuuriosakond, praktikant

**Peamised uurimisvaldkonnad:**

kultuurisemiootika; turunduse semiootika; filosoofiline antropoloogia; müüdi, turunduse, massi- ja tarbimiskultuuri semiootika; tänapäevane tarbimis- ja õigus-mütoloogia; muusika ajalugu

**Olulisemad publikatsioonid:**

Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2018. Darth Vader in Ukraine: On the boundary between reality and mythology. *Semiotica. Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies* 221: 261–277.

Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2016. Review of “Morenets Volodymyr, ed. 2014. Tertium Non Datur. Issue Of Cultural Identity Within Literature And Philosophical Discourse of 19th–21st c.”. *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal* 3: 223–225.

Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2016. Mythologemes and Mythemes. Semiotic Markers of Myth in Contemporary Mass Culture. In: Rodriguez Higuera, Claudio Julio; Bennett, Tyler James (eds.), *Concepts for Semiotics*. (Tartu Semiotics Library 16.) Tartu: University of Tartu Press: 27–48.

Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2014. Tsyfrovyyi vymir masovoyi kultury yak sere-dovyshe konstruivannyya mifologii (Digital dimension of mass culture as the environment for mythology construction). *Magisterium* 55: 48–54.

Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2013. Mif u masovij kulturi i pravovij realnosti: pytannyya spivvidnoshennia (Myth in mass culture and legal reality: the issue of correlation). *Naukovi Zapysky NaUKMA* 141: 18–22.

Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2013. Otnosheniye k zakonu (povedencheskoj norme) v talmudicheskoy culture v sravnenii s khristianstvom (Attitude to law (rule of conduct) in Talmudic literature in comparison to Christianity). *Judaica v Odessa (Hebrew Studies in Odessa)* 3: 97–105.

Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2012. Pravova mifologia yak javyshe pravovoji dijsnosti (The Mythology of Law As A Legal Reality Phenomenon, Its Essence And Features). *Philosophical And Methodological Problems of Law* 4(2): 60–71.

Zaporozhtseva, Lyudmyla 2012. Pravovyyi hronotop yak ontologichna determinanta aktyvatsii pravovoho mifu (Legal “Space-Time” as an ontological determinant of legal myth activation). *Academy of Advocacy Journal* 15(2).

**Saadud uurimistoetused ja stipendiumid**

2014–2015 SA Archimedes riikidevaheline stipendium

2015 SA Archimedes, DoRa5, lühiajalise õpirände stipendium

## DISSERTATIONES SEMIOTICAE UNIVERSITATIS TARTUENSIS

1. **Михаил Ю. Лотман.** Структура и типология русского стиха. Тарту, 2000.
2. **Елена Григорьева.** Эмблема: структура и прагматика. Тарту, 2000.
3. **Valdur Mikita.** Kreatiivsuskäsitluste võrdlus semiootikas ja psühholoogias. Tartu, 2000.
4. **Ирина Аврамец.** Поэтика новеллы Достоевского. Тарту, 2001.
5. **Ян Левченко.** История и фикция в текстах В. Шкловского и Б. Эйхенбаума в 1920-е гг. Тарту, 2003.
6. **Anti Randviir.** Mapping the world: towards a sociosemiotic approach to culture. Tartu, 2004.
7. **Timo Maran.** Mimikri kui kommunikatsiooni-semiootiline fenomen. Tartu, 2005.
8. **Элеонора Рудаковская-Борисова.** Семиотика пицци в произведениях Андрея Платонова. Tartu, 2005.
9. **Andres Luure.** Duality and sextets: a new structure of categories. Tartu, 2006.
10. **Peeter Linnap.** Fotoloogia. Tartu, 2006.
11. **Daniele Monticelli.** Wholeness and its remainders: theoretical procedures of totalization and detotalization in semiotics, philosophy and politics. Tartu, 2008.
12. **Andreas Ventsel.** Towards semiotic theory of hegemony. Tartu, 2009.
13. **Elin Sütiste.** Tõlke mõiste dünaamikast tõlketeaduses ja eesti tõlkeloos. Tartu, 2009.
14. **Renata Sõukand.** Herbal landscape. Tartu, 2010.
15. **Kati Lindström.** Delineating Landscape Semiotics: Towards the Semiotic Study of Landscape Processes. Tartu, 2011.
16. **Morten Tønnessen.** Umwelt transition and Uexküllian phenomenology. An ecosemiotic analysis of Norwegian wolf management. Tartu, 2011. 231 p.
17. **Anu Sarv.** Õppejõu eneserefleksioon ja professionaalne identiteet. Tartu, 2013, 141 lk.
18. **Vadim Verenich.** Semiotic models of legal argumentation. Tartu, 2014, 249 lk.
19. **Maarja Ojamaa.** The transmedial aspect of cultural autocommunication. Tartu, 2015, 173 p.
20. **Tiit Remm.** Sociocultural Space: Spatial Modelling and the Sociocultural World. Tartu, 2015, 142 p.
21. **Riin Magnus.** The Semiotic Grounds of Animal Assistance: Sign Use of Guide Dogs and Their Visually Impaired Handlers. Tartu, 2015, 154 p.
22. **Davide Weible.** Exaptation: Towards a Semiotic Account of a Biological Phenomenon. Tartu, 2016, 144 p.



23. **Mari-Liis Madisson.** The Semiotic Construction of Identities in Hypermedia Environments: The Analysis of Online Communication of the Estonian Extreme Right. Tartu, 2016, 195 p.
24. **Claudio Julio Rodríguez Higuera.** The Place of Semantics in Biosemiotics: Conceptualization of a Minimal Model of Semiotic Capabilities. Tartu, 2016, 148 p.
25. **Kadri Tüür.** Semiotics of Nature Representations: on the Example of Nature Writing. Tartu, 2017, 257 p.
26. **Gleb Netchvolodov.** Pictorially simplified images as machine vision design tool: semiotics approach. Tartu, 2017, 143 p.
27. **Сильви Салупере.** О метаязыке Юрия Лотмана: проблемы, контекст, источники. Tartu, 2017, 210 с.
28. **Remo Gramigna.** Augustine and the study of signs and signification. Tartu, 2018, 237 p.
29. **Nelly Mäekivi.** The Zoological Garden as a Hybrid Environment – A (Zoo)semiotic Analysis. Tartu, 2018, 172 p.
30. **Silver Rattasepp.** The Human Mirror. A Critique of the Philosophical Discourse on Animals from the Position of Multispecies Semiotics. Tartu, 2018, 156 p.
31. **Ott Puumeister.** On Biopolitical Subjectivity: Michel Foucault's perspective on biopolitics and its semiotic aspects. Tartu, 2018, 170 p.