

УДК 165.9: 159.955.4

“Objectifying” and “Ontologizing” Paradigms in History of Philosophical Reflection of Myth

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Received 15.06.2011, received in revised form 16.11.2011, accepted 18.01.2012

The problems of history of philosophical reflection of myth and its dialectics starting with an “objectifying” paradigm conveying demythologizing positions to an “ontologizing” paradigm as a symptom of the present remythologization of culture are considered in the article. The most authoritative conceptions of myth formed in the context of the positions of postclassical philosophy in the 20th century find their place in this study.

Keywords: myth, philosophy of myth, neomythological conscience, demythologization, remythologization, “objectifying” and “ontologizing” paradigms of myth.

Introduction

There are very different theoretical models of myth actualized in history of philosophical reflection, one way or another relevant to the positions of demythologization or remythologization common to the whole culture and dominating at different stages of the cultural and historical process. Every theory of myth amplifies the general state of affairs bringing something new in comprehension of a “mythical” phenomenon. Thus, for instance, myth is comprehended as a form of thought in various current theories, i.e. mythical thinking which conveys specific mentality (L. Levy-Bruhl); and as a structure isomorphic to the collective unconscious archetypes (C.G. Jung); and as an autonomous symbolic form of culture (E. Cassirer); and as a code of thought, a logical model of thinking, and a structure of

the unconscious (C. Levi-Strauss); and as a sign of semiotic system (O.M. Freudenberg); and as an aspect of “mythos”, i.e. a whole and undifferentiated primary experience of the world as wholeness (while “myth” is a verbalized form of that experience, and “mythology” is human logos of “mythos”) (J.S. Osachenko), etc. Every theory of myth is based on a personal knowledge and relation of a philosopher to the subject matter, for, according to A.F. Losev’s opinion, everyone who deals with myth has intuition of myth, and, consequently, presence of myth in a researcher’s consciousness logically precedes the very operations with myth (Losev, 1991). Subjectivity and pluralism of the forms of studies on myth are based on the fact that today the most significant philosophical conceptions of myth are interpretations expressing a specific character of individual attitude towards myth of each of those

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authors of theories of myth, and those conceptions are inseparably connected with the whole world-view system of each of them.

Philosophical reflection of the "mythical" phenomenon is formalized as the "ontologizing" paradigm in the present situation of remythologization when myth begins to be comprehended as an immanent element of any culture and fundamental condition of its being. The objects of this study are dialectics of turning of philosophical reflection of myth from the "objectifying" paradigm of myth to the "ontologizing" one and theoretical and methodological base of its formation in the situation of domination of remythologized cultural positions.

Materials and Methods

The methodological base of the research on myth is a thesis: there is only one evident thing regarding myth – myth is a system of ideas as the only possible and true image of the world for their bearers, with a status of the absolute truth whatever improbable and absurd they seemed to be (Steblin-Kamenskiy, 1976). We can fix a specific feature of perception (to be precise – lack of perception) of mythical constructions of "those who live in myth" (the term applied by A. Ulyanovsky, the author of the mythical design conception); they don't reflect myth at all; that is an unalterable part of their life reality and a belief they immediately experience. "Those who live in myth" are guided by myth as a self-evident idea, self-sufficient for effective orientation in the world and harmonious perception of the world. The content of myth is the absolute truth and an object of faith (the trust based on suggestion) for mythologized conscience of a man living in myth. Myth converts into its contrast in reflexive perception – that is fancy which can be subjected to various interpretations bringing to many kinds of interpretation of myth. In philosophical reflection of myth, description

of the "ontologizing" paradigm is based on the comparative and historical approach, system seeing of formation of theory of philosophy of myth in the cultural and historical context, a personal insight into "mythical air" achieved by the authors of the philosophical concepts of myth, and phenomenological positions in research on myth from the point of the present neomythological conscience isomorphic to a mythical mind.

Point

The study of the phenomenon of myth has a long history, and its origin is connected with the process of "demythologization" of consciousness, a split of mythological syncretism, a loss of faith in literal realism of myth, and differentiation of cultural forms out of the whole mythological world view. The first philosophical conceptions of myth appeared and were formed in the crisis period of totality of mythical conscience when myth ceased being considered as something obvious and as a natural world order clear in itself. Mythological outlook was analyzed and criticized from the point of another abstracted view not included in the very space of myth and devoid of seeing from the point of myth. From A.F. Losev's point of view, the source of the demythologization is a theoretical reflection over mythological conscience. The very change from the entirely substantial pre-reflexive process of myth creation literally conceived to mythology as a "science of myths" is an evidence of reflexive attitude towards myth (the very transition from myth to mythology as a "logos of myth" is already a sign of demythologization).

Is there any possibility of theoretical study of myth without demythologization of its own object of study?

The antinomy of methodology and a world view is conceptualized in modern philosophy of myth: on the one hand, because of non-self-

reflexive nature of mythological conscience, "culture of myth" can be adequately comprehended and estimated only from the point of some other culture and cognitive resources, and, on the other hand, formal and logical theoretical reflection demythologizes myth with its nature inaccessible to comprehension, for in this case, there isn't a study of myth, but there is a consideration of its reverberation in the mirror of demythologizing reflection.

There is a rather skeptical estimation of possibility of comprehension of the nature of myth by means of a theoretical and discursive thought and possibility of adequate translation from the mythical language into the non-mythical one in philosophy of myth. In his statement about impossibility to comprehend myth by the categories of rational thinking, W. Wundt posits that any rational interpretation of myth is out of true knowledge about nature of myth because of the fact that there is an attempt to explain myth through the features of human consciousness appearing from the mythological way of thinking. Here the mythologist brings that point of view in myth that he takes towards myth. E. Cassirer also remarks that cognition today implies the analytical process quite contrary to the main structures of comprehension of myth and mythological thinking and unable to conceive the facts of mythological experience. C. Yamme is more thoroughgoing at a solution of this problem being convinced that the cardinal difficulty of any science or even discourse on myth is that the circumstantial reflection destroys every direct attitude towards myth depriving myth of its life sense and thus converting it into the object of the analysis estranged and left out of a subject of cognition. And according to C. Hubner's opinion, the chief problem of myth studies is that the main part of the material considered by philosophy of myth is mythology (science about myth) but not the myth itself. The distinction between myth and

mythology is fundamental for C. Hubner, where mythology is already a demythologizing stage of the existence of myth and it is connected with myth like scholasticism and religion or scientism and science. Myth is a primary reality existing out of its realization and "ontological system of thinking and experience" while mythology as a narrative form only consciously and inadequately copies myth (Hubner, 1996). Myth and mythology have been inseparably connected with each other since the period of "verbalization" of myth and its formalization in mythology, but still they are not identical. Our contact and touch with myth is realized only through mythology. But mythology shouldn't be prescribed to have an independent existence: there is always myth behind mythology.

Taking into account the specific nature of myth, we have to admit that the analysis of myth, which is impossible to be carried out from the point of the very mythological consciousness because of its non-self-reflective character, is also irrelevant from the point of formal logic, for the logic of myth indifferent to contradiction is esteemed as unambiguously inadequate and primitive from the point of formal logic, which doesn't accept any contradictions; and as it's been already mentioned, the formal and logical analysis of myth has primarily demythologizing nature. There appears a paradoxical situation: adequate cognition of myth is "possible" neither from the point of mythical consciousness nor from the point of non-mythological one.

This contradiction is removed taking into account the comprehension of the new conscience unalienable to the mythical experience and a temperate character of the demythologizing processes. The result of philosophical reflection of the global nature of the remythologization processes is the conceptualization of the new conscience as the neomythological one; and that allows us to state conditions for negotiation of the

"objectifying" philosophical paradigm of myth when myth as an object of cognition is opposed to a subject of cognition with its demythologizing cognitive attitudes absolutely opposite to the experience of the mythical world outlook. There appears a possibility of a theoretical approach to research on myth without demythologization of its own object of study on the base of recognition of a neomythological nature of conscience of a man today; and there is a possibility of actualization of a phenomenological position in the study of the mythical feature when myth is not to be reduced to anything not being myth.

A paradoxical requirement of phenomenological conceptualization of the world from the point of mythological consciousness, which allows us to comprehend the being of myth today adequately and consider the inner structure of myth and laws of its development, was formed in modern philosophy of myth in the conceptions worked out by A.F. Losev, E. Cassirer, L. Levy-Bruhl, etc. For instance, L. Levy-Bruhl is convinced that myth is necessary to be studied from the point of mentality reflected in myth. E. Cassirer also insists on the necessity of comprehension of myth based on its own nature, i.e. according to the analogy with E. Husserl's "phenomenological reduction".

Myth is conceptualized as a source of any kind of phenomenon of conscience and as continuum of every sense, and as a life horizon being the ultimate context of comprehension of reality. In phenomenological philosophy, there is a substantiation of the idea that myth as a possibility of organization of human experience sets conditions of the one whole intentional life of conscience forming its horizon (Osachenko, 1994).

A.F. Losev develops a phenomenological position of myth studies in Russian philosophy; he states that myth is to be interpreted mythically basing on the material engendered by

mythological conscience (Losev, 1991). Myth is real like the other social and historical ontologies, but it is also primary, which determines the special place of myth in culture. As far as reality of myth has a mythical nature (myth is real only for a mythical subject living in myth), the substantiation of myth is unnecessary for an adherent of myth and impossible for a critic of myth (Ньбнер, 1996).

These points indicate conceptualization of an unauthentic character of objectifying and demythologizing research attitude towards the very nature of myth. Comprehension of "myth" phenomenon from the point of modern "neomythological" conscience results in formation of the "ontologizing" paradigm in philosophical theory of myth.

Example

Let us consider the processes of re-comprehension of the "objectifying" paradigm and formation of the "ontologizing" one with the change of conditions and grounds of theoretical reflection of the mythical feature taken as an example in philosophy of myth. While searching for the answer to the question "Why has myth become an object of philosophical reflection, and what are the conditions of formation of the "objectifying" paradigm of myth?", we come to a paradoxical conclusion that the perverted, deformed and simplified comprehension of myth has made it be the problem of philosophy of the Modern History. In the age of Enlightenment, myth in its artificially "demonized" aspect started being comprehended as a concentrated form and embodiment of everything opposing "ratio". The growth of demythologization coincides with the age of Enlightenment, the apotheosis of uncritical and optimistic Rationalism with its specific comprehension and estimation of myth as the antipode of ratio. "Myth" category gets its functional destination of ideological

cliche for intentional depreciation and discredit of everything out of the standards of the totally rationalized European-centric thought.

The primitive image of myth is cultivated by means of categorical apparatus of rationalism from the point of rationalism in the age of Enlightenment. Myth is analyzed within the frames of "mythical – rational" dichotomy undoubtedly resolved in favour of the "rational" aspect. The formula "From Myth to Logos" signifies the absolute contraposition of myth and philosophy as the cardinal demythologizing force in its scientific aspect.

In the "objectifying" paradigm, myth as an object of philosophical reflection is estimated from the point of the base of philosophical foundations of naturalism, rationalism, positivism, and scientism historically determined. The views of "physiomythological" ("mythological" and "naturalistic") conceptions of myth, anthropological ("evolutionistic") school, as well as ritual, functional, sociological, and psychological theories of myth were formed within the frames of these positions.

Myth is considered through comparison with religious ideas and is comprehended as externalization of nature in the concepts of "mythological" (C. Dupuis, B. Bauer, K. Volney, A. Drews, and others) and "naturalistic" (A. Kuhn, W. Schwartz, J. Grimme, and others) schools. Having worked out "language" and "conscience" notions, the linguistic rationalistic conceptions of myth formed in the 19th century (M. Мьller, A.N. Afanasyev, A.A. Potebnya and others) greatly anticipated the conclusions of philosophy of language today about the significance of language in the genesis of mythological conscience. The originality of linguistic conceptions is that myth begins to be comprehended as a form of mythological conscience.

The English anthropological ("evolutionistic") school (A. Taylor, A. Lang and

others) traces myth back to animism; myth is defined as a primitive form of science.

J. Frazer's ritualistic doctrine considering myth as a model of magical ritual was developed by F.M. Cornford, who substantiated the primacy of ritual over myth, and by B.K. Malinowski, who discovered the real functional connection between myth and ritual, which became the basis of ritual and mythological critique at modern study of literature (R. Chase, N. Frye and others) and in research of W. Turner, M.M. Bahtin, V.Y. Propp, S.A. Tokarev and others. The deductions of ritual theory of myth allow comprehension of the paradigmatic unity of myth and ritual to exist and orient an investigation on myth to realization of the functional aspect of creation of myth.

B.K. Malinowski's reference to the functions of myth makes myth to be comprehended as a social institution with its important social functions to keep up traditions and steadiness of culture; a social institution also codifies beliefs, sanctions and harmonizes social life, and serves as "the Holy Scripture" as a mean of regulation of social and cultural being.

There is a survey of the genesis of myth as a social and cultural phenomenon and substantiation of the idea of autonomy of social reality in the scientific research of the French sociological school (E. Durkheim, L. Лйvy-Bruhl). The general important idea of the functional and sociological approaches is the idea of socio-centrism: society is defined as a true model of the world.

Psychological research on myth (A. Schopenhauer, W. Wundt, W. Dilthey, F. Nietzsche, W. Pareto, C.G. Jung and others) formed the bases of comprehension of creation of myth as a real and actual function of psyche of a civilized man, which later found its development in psychoanalytic philosophy synthesizing Nietzschean comprehension of myth with scientific character of W. Wundt's conception and

his theory of mythological fantasy as a universal phenomenon.

The result of rational philosophical study of myth as an object is reference to the "mythological conscience" notion modeled as conception of "pre-logical" thinking in L. Ljvy-Bruhl's research works; it has functions according to the law of "participation".

Thus, studies of myth within the "objectifying" paradigm and ontologizing reorientation of research on myth take place in the context of dominant classical philosophical positions and later on those ones of Modernism.

The demythologizing researching position of comprehension of myth is overdone, the problem of contraposition of Myth and Logos turns into the problem of comparison of "culture of myth" and "culture of logos", mythical and non-mythical interpretative models and views of the world, and that indispensably stimulates philosophical reflection of myth. The problem of myth conceived as the antipode of "ratio" obtains philosophical status. Myth becomes an object of philosophy in the period of total rationalization of philosophical knowledge when a special scientific model of philosophy with the narrowest spectrum of rational attitude to the world is created, which apologizes the standards of scientized rationality as the only possible way of true cognition.

Myth is represented as an object of study opaque and opposing to a cognizing subject in the "objectifying" paradigm. The contraposition of subject and object, which is not characteristic of myth, plays its demythologizing part and alienates mythical kind of experience from a cognizing subject. The differentiation of the subject and the object formed inside a non-mythical model of the world is taken as a self-evident fact, though, according to C. Hubner's conviction, the old-established decision against myth and in favour of science wouldn't seem so obvious if there were just a choice between the "subjective-

and-objective" relation appropriate to myth and that one, which serves fundamental science (Hubner, 1996). And according to A.F. Losev, that choice is no less than the preference of one mythological system over another (Losev, 1991). Every concrete historical stage of development of science is characterized by certain ideals and norms of scientific cognition, i.e. a complex of some conceptual, valuable, and methodological positions; their unity is expressed by the "style of thinking" concept. The absoluteness of paradigms and styles of any of the stages of historically developed theoretical activity means that it is mythologized.

There are negotiation of absolutism of the classical rationalizing paradigm and formation of a new postclassical world view under the conditions of crisis of totally rationalistic style of thinking when myth is a link integrating positions of the world outlook in the organic whole under conditions of the present remythologization seeing the essence of a syncretic nature of myth is harmonization of perception of the world.

In the situation of destruction of enlightening myths of rationalism, there is reconceptualization of the nature of rationality and accordingly the role of myth as an antipode of "ratio". There is a confirmation of the idea that non-scientific forms of culture also have their own truth, logic, and rationality irreducible to science. Myth, art, morality, religions, and ordinary conscience achieve the status of forms of rational comprehension of reality. And myth is comprehended as "the primary form of rational conceptualization of the world", not as something "different" from ratio, but as some "different form of rationality" and as "the supreme form of system nature (rationality) of ordinary conscience".

A special work "The truth of myth" is dedicated to consideration of rationality of myth developed by C. Hubner who thinks "rationality" to be "semantic intersubjectivity"

and distinguishes four aspects of rationality: empirical, logical, operational, and normative. Hubner comes to the conclusion on the basis of comparative analysis of the ontological systems of science and myth:

- The experience in myth is substantiated in the aspect of empirical intersubjectivity as much as in science, and "the predominance" of science over myth is a historical phenomenon and it is not signified by superior rationality or realness of science;
- Semantic intersubjectivity of myth is incomparable with a scientific one, but it is analogous with semantic intersubjectivity, which characterizes all the spheres of human activity (science, "real world" of everyday life, etc.) and therefore science doesn't get an advantage over myth;
- The ontology laid in the base of myth is constructed no less systematically than ontology of science, it means that myth has its mythical logic;
- Rational choice is absolutely excepted in the point of normative objects of myth and science.

Thereby, according to C. Hubner's statement, as far as science is not more rational than myth, science cannot disprove myth due to its absolute "ascientific" character, and the critique of myth is not appropriate from the point of science due to the incommensurability of myth with science; and that allows us to represent the choice between the scientific and mythical explanative models as a pure mythological phenomenon (Hubner, 1996).

Neo-rationalizing perception of myth as a form of rational comprehension of the world posits myth as an actual social and cultural phenomenon. In the context of the present re-mythologization, neo-rationalization of myth becomes a mean of increase of epistemological and social and cultural significance of myth, which has its

own "logic" (C. Levi-Strauss, Y.E. Golosovker, M. Livshitz, etc.), "truth" (E. Cassirer, M. Eliade, A.F. Losev and others), "rationality" (C. Hubner, C. Yamme, B.L. Gubman, N.S. Avtonomova and others), necessarily posits its significance as an object of philosophical research, and reveals its categorical structure. Myth, comprehended as a form of rationality together with other "non-scientific" and "trans-rational" (from the point of classical rationality) mental phenomena, gets legitimate status alongside with equal forms of rational comprehension of the world in modern philosophy.

Thus, we can fix a paradoxical connection of genesis of philosophical problematics of myth with demythologizing positions on the basis of study of history of formation of the "objectifying" philosophical paradigm of myth. That paradox is philosophical reflection of myth actualized in the periods of demythologization. Myth spontaneously became one of the first elements of the problematic area of philosophy in history (formation of philosophical problematics in the epoch called "axial time" by K. Jaspers). Myth as the antipode of "ratio" reflexively and non-spontaneously began to be an object of philosophy in the period of maximal and total rationalization of philosophical knowledge (hyper-rationalism and positivism of New European philosophy), and there are paradoxical legitimation and re-actualization of myth as a form of rational comprehension of reality in the current "neo-rationalistic" (formally demythologizing) conceptualization of myth.

The "objectifying" paradigm of myth characterizing the absolutized rationalism of classical philosophy based on the principle of Cartesian "subject-and-object" dualism is overwhelmed, and the new "ontologizing" paradigm is formed in the process of formation of the postclassical style of thinking in philosophy of myth in the XIX-XX centuries. The tendencies

of ontologization of culture, conscience, and language appropriate of modern philosophy also permeated into myth. As it has been already mentioned, myth is represented as an object of study opposing to a cognizing subject alienated from mythical experience in the "objectifying" paradigm. Myth is conceived as immanent-and-existential source of culture and as objective reality.

F. Schelling defined mythology as a destiny of a nation and a lot fallen to it from the very start. Having substantiated the absolute unconscious nature of mythological ideas, Schelling tells about unpremeditation of mythical creative constructs and their persistent reality and absolute realness for mythologized conscience. Schelling was convinced that the objective origin of mythology independent of the human subjectivity gives it objective content and realness (Schelling, 1989).

The universality of cultural significance of myth is manifested in "philosophy of life". In F. Nietzsche's opinion, "only the horizon furnished with myths encircles cultural development to the complete wholeness", and for O. Spengler, mythical structures are cultural prototypes and pre-forms active in every phenomenon of present spiritual life.

Having developed Freud's symbolic theory of myth, C.G. Jung substantiates the universal nature of myth and human existence enrooted in the sphere of myth; he demonstrates the process of creation of myths as a real actual function in psyche of a man today. According to C.G. Jung's definition, reality of myth is the absolute and objective reality, and its verity is not to be doubted and doesn't have any alternative for mythologized conscience.

Ernst Cassirer thinks that myth is one of autonomous symbolic forms of culture along with language, art, religion, and science defined as "forms of measures of existence". Ontologizing myth, Cassirer defines it as "the world" and

positive, supreme, and self-consistent reality without any other metaphysical or psychological reality behind. Myth as an autonomous symbolic form of culture is represented as an ontological system necessarily a priori having its own truth in Cassirer's theory.

According to numinous interpretation, myth is a system of reality embracing the whole reality of life. A living myth is a source of sense and meaning of human life for M. Eliade. Ontological character of myth lies in its paradigmatic and archetypal nature (Eliade, 1995). In C. Hubner's opinion, myth is a closed ontological system based on transcendental grounds. The privileged position of mythical ontology is stipulated not only by its reality, but also by priority regarding all socio-historical ontological systems (Hubner, 1996).

According to C. Levy-Strauss, myth is an objectively existing structure, code of thought and transcendent meanings common to the whole humankind. Proving the connection between myth and collective unconscious, Levy-Strauss is convinced that "not people think with myths", but «myths think with people» or even "myths think over themselves" (Meletinskyi, 2000).

In Russian philosophy, the brightest demonstration of the ontological status of myth is A.F. Losev's works. From A.F. Losev's point of view, myth is the very concrete being, "true and absolutely literal reality", "supreme in its specificity, maximally intensified and utterly tensed reality" (Losev, 1991).

The ontologization of myth is represented with Y.S. Osachenko's and L.V. Dmitrieva's research work "Introduction to philosophy of myth" in Russian philosophy today; they turn to clarification of immanent presence of being in the bosom of any discourse and conscience. Osachenko and Dmitrieva come to a conclusion that characteristics of conscience given in the horizon of myth form the context of comprehension

of reality while nothing can be the context of myth as it is. Thereby history and culture are considered as actualization of myth. Phenomenological and hermeneutic approach to comprehension of myth brings the authors of "Introduction to philosophy of myth" to the definition of myth as "the universal context" ("super-text" and "meta-text"), "horizon of conscience" and its flexible line (Osachenko, 1994).

Resume

Thus, we can see that there is a new comprehension of "subject and object" unity (its meta-structure is syncretism of perception of myth), inalienability, and immanent nature of

mythical experience in regard to human being in postclassical philosophy.

Thus, we can state that the logic of philosophical reflection of myth has a trend from the "objectifying" paradigm to the "ontologizing" one, and that is quite adequate to the logic of development of cultural dominants including philosophical ones. If the "objectifying" paradigm of myth is characterized by demythological tendencies, there is a possibility of empathic comprehension of myth, its cultural and historical significance, and vital and harmonizing potential in the "ontologizing" paradigm of myth conveying the tendency of the present remythologization.

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**«Объективирующая» и «онтологизирующая»
парадигмы в истории
философской рефлексии мифа**

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В статье рассматриваются проблемы истории философской рефлексии мифа, ее диалектика от «объективирующей» парадигмы, выражающей демифологизирующие установки – к «онтологизирующей» парадигме, являющейся симптомом современной ремифологизации культуры. В данной работе находят отражение наиболее авторитетные концепции мифа, оформившиеся в XX веке в контексте установок постклассической философии.

Ключевые слова: миф, философия мифа, неомифологическое сознание, демифологизация, ремифологизация, «объективирующая и онтологизирующая» парадигмы мифа.
