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Myth-Making as a Phenomenon of Aboriginal Culture in the Lower Amur Region and Sakhalin in the 19th-21st Centuries

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The subject of the study is the characteristics, trends and regularities of the process of myth-making of the indigenous peoples of the Southern Far East of Russia – the Nanais, Negidals, Orochs, Udeghes, Uiltas, Ulchs and Nivkhs; mechanisms for formation, borrowing of myths and their socio-cultural functioning in the traditional and modern ethnic environment. The objective of the work is the study of myth-making as the basis of the traditional culture of the Tungusics and Nivkhs of the Southern Far East of Russia in the 19th-21st centuries, justification of the idea of aboriginal myth-making as a special way of ethno-cultural self-development and self-identification of ethnos and personality in a multicultural environment, form-making in the modern aboriginal process of the culture genesis.

Keywords: myth, myth-making, mythosymbol, ethno-culture, self-identification, culture genesis.

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Research area: culture studies.

1. Introduction into the research problem

In the 21st century, culture of the indigenous peoples of Russia is undergoing complex transformational changes that actualize a phenomenon of myth-making, which is the process of creation and modernization of myths. Being a product of the activities of both the mythological consciousness – a certain hierarchized, archetypal foundation or a matrix of mythologems, and mythological thinking – a mechanism of their functioning, myth-making differs from other cultural phenomena with its innovative nature. As a result of myth-making

activities, new myths or other variants of previously common ideas of myth occur. Myth-making as a process of personal or collective figurative-symbolic renewal of world views has significant synergetic possibilities: it can not only preserve and translate a tradition, but also significantly reorganize the existing world.

The address to the scientific analysis of myth-making in the Tungusic and Nivkh culture in the Southern Far East of Russia in the 19th-21st centuries contributes to the expansion of the methodological, empirical and historiographic basis of modern cultural science; deepening of scientific ideas about the dialectical processes

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of mythogenesis, mythotransformation, mythoacculturation and other cultural phenomena that occurred in the past and are taking place in a modern environment of the Amur Region and Sakhalin aborigines. It reveals the specifics of myth as a major form-making phenomenon of culture genesis of the aboriginal culture and clarifies the scientific idea about myth not only as a special way of comprehension, design and construction of reality, but also as a form of the aboriginal culture genesis.

The study of aboriginal myth-making also solves the problems of a historical, ethnic and cultural nature: it contributes to the clarification of the general issues of cultural and social genesis, reveals the origins of national culture and its inter-ethnic communication, shows the development of the artistic process from myth and ritual to the aspectual and genre variety of contemporary art. In addition, examination of the phenomenon of mythology and myth-making of aborigines in the Southern part of the Russian Far East is closely linked to the solution of the ethical and moral issues of our time: preservation of the ethnic diversity of the world, revival and further development of the indigenous ethnic cultures.

Thus, the totality of unsolved theoretical and historical objectives of studying culture of the indigenous peoples of the Lower Amur and Sakhalin, the significance of the myth-making activities in the development and construction of their ethnic living space in a multicultural world, in reproduction, preservation and translation of the ethno-social experience, the study of forms and mechanisms of modern myth-formation and consequences of the Soviet and post-Soviet mythological and ideological influence on ethnic culture and society cause the relevance of the chosen topic.

Ethno-mythological space of the study is limited to a group of ethnoses of the Lower Amur

and Sakhalin: the Tungusics –Nanais, Negidals, Orochs, Udeghes, Uiltas, Ulchs and special Paleo-Asiatic isolated peoples – Nivkhs that, in the middle of the 19th century, created on the territory of their historical settlement the modern regions of Primorskii Krai (Primorsk Territory), Khabarovskii Krai (Khabarovsk Territory) and Sakhalinskaia Oblast' (Sakhalin Region) – a multicultural mythological unity that allows us to allocate it for a special study.

The chronological framework covers the 19th century, when the indigenous ethnic groups of the Amur and Sakhalin had traditional patriarchal forms of culture, and the 20th century – the beginning of the 21st century – periods of the post-patriarchal ethno-existence characterized by the predominance of innovative models of myth-making.

A source base for this research included three kinds of sources: archival documents, museum collections and expeditionary field materials.

This study was made possible by the emergence of a great amount of works on the issues of myth and myth-making based on different methodological and theoretical approaches in different scientific aspects – philosophical, sociological, historical, anthropological, philological, semiotic, theological, politological, psychological, communicative and others.

But, despite such a large amount of literary data, myth-making activities of Aborigines in the South of the Russian Far East in the 19th-21st centuries have not yet become the subject of value and system generalization. However, all of this considerable amount of research works prepared and made the realization of this research project possible.

2. Conceptological research grounds

Conceptological grounds for this study are the ideas of F.W.J. Schelling about the symbolic nature of myth and its historical modification

changes, of E. Cassirer about the symbolic nature of culture, the vast creative potential of myth and its autonomy from other cultural forms, of the French sociological school of E. Durkheim and M. Mauss about social reality as a specific sphere of the human existence and activities, of A.F. Losev about mythology as reality revealed to a person in its immediate entity and sensual integrity, as well as the E. Tylor's ideas about the animistic and J. Frazer's about the sacral-magic method of myth-making of primitive models of being.

The study of the phenomenon of myth-making as a special mechanism for culture construction, the study of a symbolic nature of myth required addressing to the structuralist methodology of C. Levi-Strauss and to the semiotics of culture by V.V. Ivanov, Iu.M. Lotman, B.A. Uspenskii and others. In order to reveal social multifunctionalism of myth in an ethnopatriarchal society, we used a functional tradition of the study of culture presented in the works by B. Malinowski, A. Radcliffe-Brown and others. Fundamentally important for disclosure of historical and cultural existence of myth in the ethnic culture, its mechanisms for symbol-creativity are the works of the historian of religion M. Eliade, who conducted a comprehensive scientific study of the religious mentality of people in traditional societies.

Traditional and modern myth-making of aboriginals in the South of the Russian Far East is considered by us in the context of the conceptual approaches of Russian mythologists: A.K. Baiburin, E.D. Bliakher, Ia.E. Golosovker, V.V. Evsiukov, A.M. Zolotarev, E.M. Meletinskii, A.B. Ostrovskii, M.I. Steblin-Kamenskii, V.N. Toporov, L.Ia. Sternberg et al.

3. Statement of the problem

A hypothesis of the study is as follows. Recognizing the fact that myth and the process

of its creation – myth-making are the immanent phenomena of human consciousness and because of their archaic origin have both invariant and adaptive-modifying capacity to historical changes, mechanisms of symbolic coding of reality, it is assumed that, due to the compensatory understanding by the archetypal structures of the aboriginal consciousness in the newest time of new symbolic systems of a verbal and non-verbal nature, their use as communication channels between the irrational unconscious, the conscious and real facts of social realm, a special mechanism of means and tools of modern myth-making was created. It is adapted to modern conditions and reproduces, preserves, translates and partly (and perhaps to a large extent) transforms ethnic traditions, thus ensuring the process of ethno-cultural self-development and adaptation in history through the formation of new cultural forms as a result of continuing functioning of the mechanism of the contemporary aboriginal culture genesis.

4. Research methodology

In order to create a holistic system study of such a complex (in a multifunctional and multidimensional aspect) phenomenon of human cultural activity as myth-making, the author is guided by different methodological approaches. First of all, the study of myth-making is based on the working theoretical models of myth developed in the field of sociology of culture, philosophy, history, anthropology, ethnology, political science, psychology, communication theory. They allow us to fully consider myth as a special symbolic mechanism of reproduction, translation and modernization of the ethnic specificity in both mono- and multi-cultural environment.

In accordance with the objective of the study, the author used various methods of an interdisciplinary nature: genetic, cultural-contextual, comparative, systematic-structural

methods, a method of involved observation, survey and others. He studied major trends in the myth-making development, as well as the relict trends that provided a regressive impact on the culture genesis, gave it an ethnic identity. The author took into account typicality and uniqueness of mythocultural forms and phenomena, the breadth of their distribution and value in the historical ethnocultural process, essence and their form, a cause-and-effect link.

5. Basic concepts and classification models of the research

Culture is defined by the author as an inter-subjective system of values established in the anthro-socio-cultural genesis. Ethnos and its unique culture is the result of the historical system modifications of these values caused by certain conditions of the developmental place, social interaction, spiritual understanding of reality, in which the myth-making activity played a decisive role, especially in the early stages of the existence of mankind.

An important element of the mythothinking activity is creativity that is understood as a solution to problems that do not have a finished algorithm. In myth-making a new algorithm – a kind of a standing point as an axiom is disclosed intuitively, sensually and figuratively, but its life-giving power is sublime: it is able to “turn the world upside down”. Myth-making is a process of the personal or collective figurative-symbolic composition of life, which is a certain mythoreflexion of personality about all the accidental in life of a person and the human community, as well as of natural phenomena of the surrounding world.

A sign and an image are the two primary culture-constitution elements contributing to materialization (fixation, reproduction, translation) of information about a person and his existence

in the natural world, to communication, creation of projects of cultural constitution of habitat and achievement of the ethno-social solidarity. In this way the image due to the visibility, increased emotionality, impulsivity, inversiveness and other qualities having a strong impact directly on the behaviour of a person and society is one of the basic constructs of mythological symbolism, an operating material of mythological consciousness and thinking.

As opposed to a sign and an image, a symbol is polysemantic. A sign is transformed into a symbol as a result of the accumulation of a number of other abstract values leading to a partial or complete replacement of the original (paradigm) meaning for the one that has just been formed, due to their greater relevance for a certain communication event. Under these conditions of the ever-expanding semantic field of its use, the sign, having lost its former monosemy, inevitably becomes a symbol (Skorinov, 2004: 69, 70). As for the image, it is transformed into a symbol through addition of emotions giving it psychic energy, special reverence, dynamism and, most importantly, significance (Jung, 1997: 84). In addition, it should be noted that the symbol is not only characterized by its polysemy, but also by more complex mechanisms of functioning due to its individual and collective interpretation at the level of reproduction and translation, as well as of emotional and expressive perception. After all, just like the sign and the image it is a life particle of not only a human, but also a society.

“Natural” symbols, unlike those that were introduced by culture, arise from the unconscious content of psyche and are countless variations of the basic archetypal images. However, having passed through many transformations and a long process of the conscious cultural recombination and adaptation to the conditions of human life, they became collective images accepted in society

(Jung, 1997: 80). In our opinion, it is these cultured symbols that should be called mythosymbols.

Mythological symbols, having become part of universal and any ethnic culture, retain a significant charge of its original archetypal essence. It should be recognized that the “natural” and cultural symbols derivative on their basis are capable of expressing such ideas, for which there is no precise definition yet (Jung, 1994: 44). Apparently, a function of the mythosymbol is to comprehend and signify a single, random, unique phenomenon or event, to give a person the orientation program, first of all, in the world of the random (Bljaher, 1996: 5). It is noteworthy that a supporting point in this symbolic settling of the spatial and temporal locus is not “the world”, as is customary in modern science, but a man himself, his program of actions, which determined the existence in the archaic times of the symbolic anthropomorphism that, as was said above, became the basis of mythological thinking.

Following the logic of the above, let us note the universal nature of myth that absorbs not only the entire semantic continuum of the human, but also the cosmic being. It is a kind of a mediator between spaces and times, ethnoses and their cultures. Through myth, macrocosm and microcosm (nature and man) become isomorphic to one another, and in ancient times a human body or a sacred ancestor’s body – a totem serves as an ideal model of construction of various spatial and temporal forms: from spatial to domestic chronotope. Hence, myth is not just a structure of consciousness, a way and a tool of understanding of the world of nature, its phenomena and foundations of the universe, but it is also a sample – a model, in the likeness of which an empirical, transcendental, artistic and other realities are created. A genius product of this collective and individual creation is culture genetically carrying the mythological features and originality.

The researchers note that the symbolic nature of myth eventually determines the interpenetration connection of the process of myth-making with other forms of creative activity: religious, artistic, scientific, ideological. Religion is another attempt of a man to turn the world of Occasion into the orderly world of transcendental reality. The process of its creation is accomplished by dogmatization of mythosymbolics in order to express the essence of the absolute – the eternal, immutable, timeless, sacred world. Therefore, religion is canonized mythology implemented in the special ritualized existence.

The mythical and religious consciousness and existence derived on their basis are interpenetrated: as a rule, integrative fields occur on the border, in places of the nearest temporal and spatial junction of phenomena, where the mythical and religious symbols create peculiar symbioses, thus creating producing some amorphous, disordered, but at the same time quite stable and viable elements of the spiritual and material culture – the earliest forms of religions: totemism, witchcraft, shamanism, as well as heretical movements in religion, individual interpretations of scriptures and various cults, including the modern ones: the cult of personality, money, items, and others. After all, the individual or collective interpretation of the sacred text triggers a myth-making mechanism that, in turn, creates a symbolic variation detrimental to the dogma and even another mythonarrativeness. This can lead to the reverse process of transformation of the religious symbolics into the mythical, a dogma into myth.

Artistic creation is a special kind of symbolic transduction mythoreality into the world of artistic representation that is a certain process of transformational shift of the symbolic meaning from myth into the representational

form of expression, which leads to the emergence of new symbolic qualities both at the substantive and formal levels of their manifestation. In other words, it is a process of artistic symbolization of the mythoworld.

Unlike mythological thinking, the scientific thinking concentrates not on the symbol, but on the sign. Science cannot destroy myth. It only “recognizes it and removes a rational, logical or numerical plan from it” (A.F. Losev). Mythological epistemology is different from the scientific one by the fact that the process of cognition of the world is implemented through the cognition of oneself – a man’s inner world. Science is primarily focused on the study of the external world – nature. The aim of the mythological cognition, as well as any other, is comprehension of the truth contained in the mythological images, a deep sacred meaning of which is recognized only to the initiated.

During the period of the fall of the religion authority in Western Europe in the 17th-18th centuries a new ground for overcoming Chaos of the world of Occasion, preservation of ethnic and social community of people has become ideology – a new form of the cultural and creative activity that has its specific morphology. Any ideology is a synthesis of theoretical statements, philosophical ideas, social images and myths. Social myth is only one element of the ideological structure, the fundamental core of which is a social, political doctrine resulting from a scientific theorization and mythological imagery and intuitive associative thinking (L.N. Voevodina). The power of ideology, as well as myth, is not that they are true, but that they are announced to be such by separating their legitimacy by the ethno-social majority.

Myth is a historically changeable cultural phenomenon. Being socially determined, its content is established by social relations in the

ethnos and therefore is subject to permanent transformations in the course of history, although it is slower than other forms of ethnic culture. On this basis, we propose the following historical and culturological classification of mythofoms of culture of the Tungusics and Nivkhs in the South of the Russian Far East: 1) archaic myths – myths of the Amur and Sakhalin aborigines that existed during the time of their independent tribal existence before becoming a part of Russia in the middle of the 19th century; 2) patriarchal tribal myths of the middle of the 19th – early 20th centuries, which are characterized by the growing influence on the mythological process of the foreign-culture factor – state ideology of the Russian Empire, Christian Orthodox religion and the myth-making activity of migratory peoples; 3) modern mythology of the 30’s of the 20th-21st centuries in two variants of its development: Soviet and post-Soviet society.

The implemented experience of definitions of myth and myth-making, historical classification of mythological forms of aboriginal culture of the Tungusics and Nivkhs in the South of the Russian Far East in the 19th – early 21st centuries allow us to fully realize the objective of the study. It creates a theoretical basis for the development of the historical and culturological conception of the myth-making phenomenon as a primary method for the ethnic representation, preservation, reproduction, translation and modernization of culture of the indigenous peoples and, most importantly, clarifies the scientific understanding of myth as a special culture-creative form of reproduction, design, construction of reality not only in everyday life, but also in the religious, artistic and ideological areas for the purpose of organization and regulation of the ethno-cultural space both in a traditional and modern multicultural society.

**6. Myth-making as a major method
of the development of reality, simulation,
existence and translation of the traditional
culture of aboriginals
(19th – early 20th centuries)**

6.1. Mythological image of being

In the patriarchal era the main method of the development of reality – acquisition and accumulation of ethno-social experience, conservation of tribal solidarity and reproduction of the traditional order – was myth-making. As a result of the myth-making activity syncretic concrete-sensuous images, symbols and other products of imagination have been reproduced based on the cyclic principle and the interpretative basis. Having been included in the current system of spatial, temporal, numerical and other symbolic oppositions, they formed an ethnic model of the world. The Tungusics' and Nivkhs' model has a three-part structure and describes the composition of both the earthly and unearthly sacred worlds: horizontally – the mountain-taiga, the water; vertically – the heavenly and the underground. This model was preceded by a binary cosmography, which was based on the opposition of the centre – the human world – and the other world of the unpeople on the other side. All the other worlds are a kind of a mirror reflection of the real human way of life, their spiritual and material historical evolution.

In the 19th century – the 20's of the 20th century, mythology of the aboriginals in the Amur region and Sakhalin ensured legitimacy of the order established by the ethno-tradition and acted as a dominant form of social regulation of the tribal collective, a behavioural model for all its members. This period of the historical existence of the Tungusics and Nivkhs due to the mythological determinancy of all occurring ethnocultural processes can be called mythological with a certain degree of conditionality.

The conducted reconstruction of the ancient mythological model dating back to the image of the World Tree, as well as an overview of the mythological cosmovision of the Tungusics and Nivkhs in the South of the Russian Far East in the 19th century – the 20's of the 20th century provide evidence of the existence in the past of a unique ethnic culture, special mythothinking and world perception, an original method of development and creation of ethno-existence (Skorinov, 2004: 94-127). The main feature of their culture-creativity was the unique interdependence of mythological, early religious beliefs and ritual activities with economic and living conditions of the patriarchal tribal community of fishermen and hunters, as well as the peculiarities of their natural developmental place.

*6.2. A traditional rite of the projection
of myth, and a myth-making act*

The life of the indigenous communities in the South of the Russian Far East in the 19th – early 20th centuries was completely ritualized. A philosophical foundation for the traditional rite was myth regulating perception of the world by a man and his behaviour in it. After all, the rite is a meaningful act reasoned by myth. Through its ritual hypostasis, myth ethnically represents society and its culture, sacralizes human's everyday life, and translates the spiritual experience of the people for the purpose of the organization and regulation of ethno-cultural space in a multicultural society and adaptation of a foreign component. A mythological nature of traditional culture of the aboriginals of Amur and Sakhalin also defined a dominant position of ritual culture, different forms (considered by us as a projection of myth, unique way of the myth-making activity and its implementation mechanisms in the ethno-social reality) of which practically provided implementation of the power function of myth by social mobilization of a group for the solution of challenges they faced.

The traditional ritual culture of the indigenous peoples of the Amur and Sakhalin is ritualism of the patriarchal tribal ethno-society of hunters and fishermen. The myth-making activity of the Amur and Sakhalin ethnic groups created unique mythology and ritualism of human economic activities (fishing rituals, rituals of development of human habitat), human life cycle (rituals of giving birth and upbringing of children, erotic and marriage rituals, funerals and memorial ceremonies), as well as festive, shamanic and medical rituals. In it, both archetypal and innovative cosmovision adapted to the conditions of ethno-existence of a man, his understanding of the past, the present and the future are expressed in a kind of a coded semantic-symbolic form.

In the patriarchal era, mythological innovation is a result of the interpretation of an ethnotradition. Ethnic peculiarity of the Amur-Sakhalin ritual myth-making of the 19th century – the 20's of the 20th century is manifested in the priority presentation of the tribal and water mythoideas and ritual acts associated with them.

Thus, the mythological nature of traditional culture of the aborigines of the Amur and Sakhalin also defined a dominant position of ritual culture, different forms (considered by us as a projection of myth, unique way of the myth-making activity and its implementation mechanisms in the ethno-social reality) of which practically provided implementation of the power function of myth by social mobilization of a group for the solution of challenges they faced (Skorinov, 2004: 128-170).

6.3. Shamanism as a way of the myth-making activity

Shamanism among the aboriginals of the Amur Region and Sakhalin was of a clannish character. Each clan had one strong and several weak shamans. Nevertheless, in cases of emergency the natives were allowed to go to shamans from other ethnic and social groups. The spiritual basis

of the Amur-Sakhalin shamanism was magical mythology. Its main function was to preserve the clannish community in critical conditions.

An Amur-Sakhalin shaman is an ethnocultural version of a magician, wizard, sorcerer and spellweaver. According to the popular opinion, he is a chosen one who received a revelation on his high spiritual mission from deities or patron spirits in a dream or in a special psychophysical state – trance. The highest mission of the shaman, a pastor of a human soul, was carried out through a special ritual procedure – a shamanistic ritual that symbolized an iterative cosmogonic act of the mythical archetypal creation.

Based on the conducted analysis it can be concluded that the shaman is a co-creator of the world, the world created by the god-demiurge, later entrenched by heroic deeds of an ancestor-cultural hero and transferred for conservation and care to him – the shaman, a special spiritual chosen one. But shamanism of the indigenous peoples of the Amur-Sakhalin region is nothing more than a special way of the myth-making activity – the creation of a unique ethnic and cultural reality of the transcendent experience and existence (Skorinov, 2004: 186-204).

6.4. Bear Festival as a mythoritual act

The Bear Festival in Lower Amur and Sakhalin in the 19th century – the 20's of the 20th century genetically traced back to the most ancient Paleolithic mythoreligious worship of the totem is a result of the myth-making process, an example of the long-term reproduction, translation of archetypal forms of the social and individual consciousness and their adaptation to the historical realities of the ethnoexistence. It corresponded to a mythoidea of strengthening the unity of the tribal community and was opposed to the progressive destructive trends of the new socio-economic order. Like a syncretic cultural phenomenon, it integrated in a dialectical unity

diverse family-household and field mythology and ritualism, all kinds of artistic activities, natural and cultural principles, reality and super-sensibility, practicality and high spirituality. All this gave rise to a new kind of reality – ethnocosmic mystery.

In general, the traditional Lower Amur and Sakhalin festive rituals played an important role in the social and economic practice of the Tungusics and Nivkhs. It was a catalyst for the creative potential of the ethnic group: folk dance, mime, theater, folklore, arts and applied arts, painting, sculpture, etc. Its uniqueness is due to the particular historical experience of existence. Indeed, the water area of the mighty Amur River, closeness to the sea, flora and fauna of the Far East demanded from the Tungusics and Nivkhs the individual conceptual and economic development of these natural realities, which found a kind of symbolic and sign-oriented expression in the respective festive rituals.

Thus, studies show that the aboriginal festival is a vivid manifestation of people's spirituality and ethnomentality, life ideals and aspirations, passionate faith and utilitarian needs. It is essentially sacral and is expressed only through the mythocomplex of ritual acts of a preventive and producing character. The festive ritual is based on mythology of magic, totemic and animistic beliefs of human in the surrounding nature (Skorinov, 2004: 171-185).

7. Contemporary aboriginal myth-making as a way of self-development of ethnic culture

7.1. Contemporary official and family-household ritualism of aboriginals, mechanisms of its representation and reproduction, translation and transformation

Contemporary aboriginal ritualism of the 30's of the 20th century – beginning of the 21st century

is a complex, multifaceted, multifunctional phenomena of spiritual culture. It is a syncretic alloy of the archaic and ethnic ritualism adapted to modern conditions of existence and a official and family-household mythoritual symbolic model. Under the influence of other mythoideological meanings and symbols in the 30's – 90's of the 20th century there was destruction of symbolic forms of the traditional ethnic culture of ethnic groups of the Lower Amur and Sakhalin. Instead, another cosmoforming ritual activity was formed, which created different reality – a single Soviet, and after perestroika in the 90's of the 20th century – a nationwide ethno-socio-cultural symbolic universe. Its mythoritual heroes became not sacred religious or ancestral characters, but the broad masses of aboriginal peoples, representatives of workers, peasants and intellectuals. Just like in traditional mythology, an antipode of the modern mythohero – Enemy – embodies all the evil in the ethno-cultural symbolic universe and has specific personalization in the image of an “alien”.

A contemporary official and professional, and, to a lesser extent, family-household ritual activity is based on the dramaturgy principles with the extensive use of artistic activities. Festive and ritual dramaturgy is a product of modification changes in the ideosphere consisting in the process of desacralization of the human symbolic being and creation of a special secular space-time continuum, in which the ecstatic feeling of a person is not achieved with the help of meditation techniques, but by using a variety of artistic and aesthetic means of expression. Due to the specificity of symbolic creativity and its cultural implementation, a traditional, mythoreligious ritual is always a sacred act; as for the modern secular festival built according to the method of theatricalization, it is a public action, a means of ideological influence on the masses, one of the forms of modern entertainment culture and a special kind of art, the task of which is to

ideologically, artistically and aesthetically frame the ethno-social existence of a modern human.

The phenomenon of the contemporary Lower Amur and Sakhalin aboriginal ritual culture, especially its family-household version is primarily in that the folk tradition shows its resilience and survivability in the most unfavourable conditions of existence and, moreover, the capacity for the constant transformation and adaptation in its ethnic and cultural environment of alien mythological elements and complexes. At the same time, the archetypal structures of ethnoconsciousness are able to adapt to the new symbolic systems of a verbal and nonverbal nature, using them as special channels of communication coming from the depths of the irrational unconscious, and as different forms of their material implementation in the modern multicultural reality.

Currently, ethnothinking and ethnoperception of the aboriginals of the Lower-Amur and Sakhalin are being implemented through the Russian language, ideological, artistic and other sign-symbolic universals. This circumstance leads to the specifics of the modern aboriginal world view of reality, in which a personal factor that enhances self-activity of myth-making and improvised means of its ritual implementation becomes increasingly important in contrast to the patriarchal time. In this connection it can be considered that in the 70's – 90's of the 20th century it is the national intelligentsia, having successfully mastered an alien system of verbal and nonverbal symbolic means of expression, that became the founder of the special personalized mythological models of the world embodying relic ethnogenetic and acquired foreign features.

As a special phenomenon of modern myth-making, the ritualism of the aboriginals of the Lower Amur and Sakhalin is characterized by the relevant contradictions and regularities, stable parameters of its development. Currently,

as well as in the patriarchal aboriginal past, it is this ideational sphere that exerts its myth-making potential, thanks to which in the contemporary sign-symbolic universe the ethnic qualities of culture are represented, the cultural tradition is reproduced, preserved, translated and subjected to certain transformation through the modified ritual structures (Skorinov, 2004: 206-245).

*7.2. National artistic culture
as myth-making in the new forms
and means of self-identification
of ethnos and personality*

As a result of the influence of the Slavic peoples in the 20th century a new form of culture – art culture – has been formed in a spiritual sphere of the Amur-Sakhalin ethnoses. It is represented by two types: professional and amateur creativity. In a mythoartistic activity the ancestral ethnic meanings and symbols are implemented to ensure the marking of ethnic and cultural identity and basic ethnogenetic foundations – mental codes are reproduced, translated and adapted to modern conditions of social existence.

Amateur art of the indigenous ethnic groups is a special synthesis of collective and author mythocreation harmoniously combining, on the one hand, the ethnostylistic canons, the ethnic tradition and, on the other hand, the individual improvisation and novation of other cultures. Through the various national works of decorative-applied, literary, musical, choreographic, theatrical and other areas, various forms of the club cultural and educational activities, the creative activity of the native population is implemented and the process of self-cognition of ethnogenetic meanings and self-determination of ethnicity is carried out.

The 20th century truly became a landmark for the Tungusics and Nivkhs in their pursuit of individual enlightenment, discovery of new

personal meanings. This ultimately determined a distinctive feature of the 20th and the following 21st century, which is the prevalence of individual artistic concepts in aboriginal myth-making. At this, a particular area of the creation of the author myths has become a professional literary and visual creativity represented in the works of national writers and artists. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that each aboriginal artist managed to create an original author mythworld of national images and symbols reproducing the past, representing the present and possibly projecting both close and distant future with varying degrees of success in the new expressive forms of the Russian art alien to them.

A new phenomenon for the indigenous culture became the process of individual perception of a work of art, which led to the occurrence of a special kind of the myth-making activity associated with personal interpretation of the creative idea of the author. It is a consumer of art (a viewer, listener, reader, art critic) that eventually forms mythology of perception of the work from its public recognition to ostracism. Ethnomental meanings and symbols translated in the work are mastered through the psychological mechanisms of perception.

Thus, now it is contemporary artistic myth-making by virtue of its particular emotional and figurative expression that performs important functions of social solidarity and intergenerational translation of ethnic experience, and is a means of self-identification of ethnos and personality (Skorinov, 2004: 246-286).

Overall results of the study

In the patriarchal period of its functioning (19th century – the 20's of the 20th century) the aboriginal myth-making was of an interpretational-compensatory nature and was aimed at preserving the ethnotradition as the reproduction mechanism of cohesiveness of an

ethnocultural tribal organism under conditions of ever-increasing destructive effects on it from the other ethnic cultural influences. A traditional ritual culture adjustable by myth in all its forms ensured the reproduction and translation of social experience, acted as a communicative form, imperatively strengthened the existing orders and customs in order to integrate individuals into the ethnosociety.

The aboriginal myth-making of the 30's – 90's of the 20th century is characterized by the new conditions of its functioning associated with the change of civilizational paradigms – from the patriarchal-tribal to the new contemporary cultural model of multicultural society. During this period, there were significant changes in the structure of social and individual consciousness – from the overwhelming domination of the aboriginal tribal society of mythological and early-religious thinking to the new formation, where scientific-logical, ideological, artistic aesthetic and other contemporary structural elements occurred along with archaic forms. Besides, all of these new formations were brought into the culture of the Amur-Sakhalin aboriginals from an alien ethnic source – Russian culture.

The analysis of the occurred cultural changes suggests that the main socio-forming mythoidea that for thousands of years cultivated the tribal organization of a collective was unable to undertake the challenge of the time and adapt to modernized conditions of modern life of the indigenous ethnoses. Today, a new creation is in demand, the purpose of which should be the birth of new mythology opening to the indigenous peoples of the Lower Amur and Sakhalin a path to a different symbolic setting of their existence: acquisition and accumulation of a new social experience, establishment of new principles of solidarity. The basis for the revival of culture of the Tungusics and Nivkhs may be the new ethnopresentation forms occurred as a result

of the adaptational myth-making in the Soviet times: modern ritualism, especially in its family-household aspect, and artistic culture presented by amateur and professional creativity.

Aboriginal culture of the South of the Russian Far East in the 19th – early 21st centuries that genetically goes back to the earliest forms of socio-cultural organization of life is the product of a unique myth-making of the Nanais, Negidals, Orochs, Udeghes, Uiltas, Ulchs and Nivkhs. It is a valuable part of the world culture,

a monument of its spirituality symbolically presenting relics of the past. The study of myth-making as a phenomenon of culture of the Amur Region and Sakhalin indigenous ethnic groups significantly complements national history, enriches the culture theory with new aspects and proves that without taking into account the cultural and creative contribution of these small peoples to the world civilization the world history of culture cannot be considered neither complete nor objective.

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Мифотворчество как феномен культуры аборигенов Нижнего Амура и Сахалина XIX – XXI веков

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Предметом исследования являются особенности, тенденции и закономерности процесса мифотворчества коренных малочисленных народов юга Дальнего Востока России – нанайцев, негидальцев, орочей, удэгейцев, уйльта, ульчей и нивхов; механизмы образования, заимствования мифов и их социокультурного функционирования в традиционной и современной этнической среде. Целью работы определяется исследование мифотворчества как основы традиционной культуры тунгусо-маньчжуров и нивхов юга Дальнего Востока России XIX – XXI вв., обоснование представления об аборигенном мифотворчестве как особом способе

этнокультурного саморазвития и самоидентификации этноса и личности в поликультурной среде, формообразования в современном аборигенном процессе культурогенеза.

Ключевые слова: миф, мифотворчество, мифосимвол, этнокультура, самоидентификация, культурогенез.

Научная специальность: 24.00.00 – культурология.
