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## **MOTIFS IN LITERATURE: ARCHETYPAL APPROACH**

The archetypal approach in literature is under discussion in the article. Such terms as *myth*, *mythological criticism*, *archetypes* are considered. The examples of archetypes in literature are provided.

**Keywords:** myth, motif, archetype, archetypal approach

В статье обсуждается архетипический подход в литературе. Рассматриваются такие термины, как миф, мифологическая критика, архетипы. Приводятся примеры архетипов в литературе.

**Ключевые слова:** миф, мотив, архетип, архетипический подход

Archetypal approach in literature deals with “some very deep chord” in human nature. The myth critic studies in depth the “wooden hawks” of great literature: the so-called archetypes or archetypal patterns that can vibrate in such a way that a sympathetic feeling is set off deep within the reader.

Mythological criticism is concerned with the motives that underlie human behavior. It’s a common knowledge that “motif is one of the dominant ideas in a work of literature, a part of the main theme. It may consist of a character, a recurrent image or a verbal pattern” [1]. The study of myths provides knowledge about the mind and character of a people. They are the symbolic projections of a people’s hopes, values, fears, and aspirations. Myths reflect a profound reality. Mark Schorer notes in his work “William Blake: Politics of Vision”: “Myth is fundamental, the dramatic representation of our deepest instinctual life, of a primary awareness of man in the universe, capable of many configurations, upon which all particular opinions and attitudes depend” [4, p. 25].

According to Alan W. Watts, “Myth is to be defined as a complex of stories – some no doubt fact, and some fantasy – which, for various reasons, human beings regard as demonstrations of the inner meaning of the universe and of human life” [5, p. 101]

Myths are by nature collective and communal. They bind a tribe or a nation together in common psychological and spiritual activities. Myth is the expression of a profound sense of togetherness of feeling and of action, of wholeness of living.

Every people has its own mythology that is reflected in legends, folklore and ideology. Myths develop in the cultural environments in which they appear. At the same time similar motifs or themes may be found in many different mythologies. And certain images recur in the myths of peoples widely separated in time and place. They tend to have a common meaning, to elicit similar psychological responses

and serve similar cultural functions. Such motifs and images are called archetypes, which are, in fact, universal symbols.

The common archetypes are: water, the symbol of creation; birth – death – resurrection; purification and redemption; fertility and growth. Sun usually stands for creative energy, law in nature, wisdom, spiritual vision, passage of time and life. Red symbolizes blood, sacrifice, violent passion, disorder. Green stands for growth, sensation, hope, fertility. Blue is usually highly positive, associated with truth, religious feeling, security, spiritual purity. Black (darkness) is associated with chaos, mystery, the unknown, death, primal wisdom, evil, melancholy. White is highly multivalent, signifies, in its positive aspects, light, purity, innocence. In its negative aspects it denotes death, terror, the supernatural.

Shapes also have their archetypal meaning. Circle denotes wholeness and unity; egg signifies the mystery of life and the forces of generation.

Fairy tales are wholly based on archetypes. A typical feature which runs through nearly every fairy tale is that the heroes are one-dimensional archetypes. Fairy tale characters are most often built on a number of fixed formulas which occur over and over again. Some of the more common fairy tale archetypes include: hard working and polite hero, tricky rogue hero, outcast trickster hero, the trusting fool, the selfish hero, born under a lucky star, dispatchers, helpers, villains, failures.

Many fairy tale heroes do not gain success through brilliance, strength, luck or fate. They gain success through hard work. In “The Girl in the Well” a girl finds herself in the “Other World” which exists at the bottom of the well. She is able to earn great wealth in this strange land by helping its people with their jobs. In “Grandfather Frost” the heroine is left in the cold by her wicked stepmother to freeze to death. However, when Grandfather Frost comes, she is able to survive and even get a great reward by being polite to him. Most often politeness and hard work are the keys to success when dealing with the fairy realm and magical creatures.

There are many protagonists in fairy tales who have a questionable morality, who steal to get what they want. Sometimes they steal for the greater good, but often they simply steal to get wealth for themselves. In “Thumbling as Journeyman” the Thumbling helps to rob a royal treasury. There is no indication that the king was wicked and that he deserved to be robbed.

In “The Raven, the Sun, the Moon and the Stars” Raven uses his magic to steal the sun, moon and stars from the sky deity who owns them. In this case, however, he steals the sun to bring light and warmth to humanity.

There are characters who have fallen through the social cracks, or who have been kicked out of society. Tailors are common members of this archetype in German fairy tales as the industrial revolution left tailors with very little work. Poor soldiers or veterans are another common members of this archetype as often veterans are left poor and with no peace time skills when the war is over. “The Vallant Little Tailor” tells the tale of a Tailor who sets out and through trickery and cleverness is able to defeat a giant and a unicorn in order to marry the King’s daughter.

Trust, kindness, and the ability to make friends are the means to success for some heroes. Typically, these heroes are portrayed as foolish, as somebody who shouldn't be able to succeed, such as the youngest brother, but who is able to become rich because they trusted the advice of a wise person, fairy, or other entity. In "The Fool and the Birch Tree" the protagonist trusts a birch tree to pay him for a cow he is selling.

Although a rare character in fairy tales, the Selfish Hero occurs in one of the most popular fairy tales "The Frog Prince" in which the Princess refuses to keep her promise to the frog and ultimately sets him free by trying to kill him.

Fairy tale archetypes render a lot of important themes and morals which can be applied to everyday life.

In recent years the researchers have found archetypes in more complex combinations, such as genres or types of literature. In his work "Anatomy of Criticism" Northrop Frye indicates the correspondent genres for the four seasons: comedy stands for spring, romance reminds of summer, tragedy comprises the mythos of autumn, irony is full of the mythos of winter. The mythological approach to literary analysis is based on Frye's theory that an archetype is "an element of one's literary experience" [2, p. 153].

Gilbert Murray in "The Classical Tradition in Poetry" indicates a number of parallels between the mythic elements of Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and "Oedipus" by Sophocles. The heroes of these works are haunted, sacrificial figures. Furthermore, as with the Greek tragedy, the story of Hamlet was drawn from legend. The old Scandinavian story of Amlethus, or Amlet, Prince of Jutland, was recorded in the twelfth century by Saxon Grammaticus in his "History of the Danes".

Murray cites an even earlier reference to the prototypical Hamlet in a Scandinavian poem composed in about 980 A. D. Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha fon Dechend have traced this archetypal character back through the legendary Icelandic Amlodhi to Oriental mythology. So, the core of Shakespeare's play can be considered mythic.

According to Murray, "the things that thrill and amaze us in "Hamlet" are ... things belonging to the old stories and the old magic rites, which stirred and thrilled our forefathers five and six thousand years ago..." [3, p. 204].

In the critic's opinion, to see how closely the moral norms in Shakespeare's play are related to ancient vegetation myths, we need only to note how often images of disease and corruption are used to symbolize the evil that has blighted Hamlet's Denmark. Murder does violence to both the natural cycle of life and the social organism.

There is another myth closely related to the meaning of "Hamlet", the myth of divine appointment. This was the belief, strongly fostered by such Tudor monarchs as Henry VII, Henry VIII, and Elizabeth I. They stated that not only had the Tudors been divinely appointed to bring order and happiness out of civil strife, but also any attempt to break this divine ordinance would result in social, political, and natural chaos. This myth is central in "Hamlet".

Hamlet's Denmark is a diseased and rotten state because Claudius's murder of his king-brother has subverted the divinely ordained laws of nature and of kingly succession. Hamlet's role in the drama is that of the prince-hero who must not only avenge his father's murder, but also offer himself up as a royal scapegoat. Hamlet's task is to seek out the source of the nation's malady and to eliminate it. The bloody climax of the tragedy is an essential element in the archetypal pattern of sacrifice-atonement-catharsis. Only after all those who had been infected by the evil had died, and the prince-hero himself had suffered "crucifixion" that Denmark was reborn under the healthy power of Fortinbras. Hamlet's quest leads him down the labyrinthine ways of the human mystery, the mystery of human life and destiny.

The archetypal approach reflects the contemporary dissatisfaction with the scientific concept of man. Anthropological literature seeks to restore to the reader his entire humanity, a humanity which values the primitive elements in human nature. In contrast to the splitting of the human mind into conscious and subconscious, it reestablishes us as members of the ancient race of man. Archetypal criticism seeks to discover in literature the dramatization of this membership.

### **Literature**

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