

**REVIEW OF THE MONOGRAPH BY DR. HAB. J. CUȘNIR  
 “ФЕНОМЕН ГУМАНИЗАЦИИ МИФА В ИНТЕЛЛЕКТУАЛЬНОЙ ПРОЗЕ  
 XX ВЕКА”, [THE PHENOMENON OF THE HUMANIZATION OF THE MYTH  
 IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY INTELLECTUAL PROSE], CHIȘINĂU:  
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A systematic study of the literary phenomenon of humanization of myth in the monography Dr. Hab. J. Cușnir develops the discovery made by Thomas Mann in the tetralogy *Joseph and His Brothers* and declared in the similarly-named Washington report (Library of Congress, 1942). Thomas Mann informed the cultural space about his discovery exclusively by means of literature; he could do nothing more as a writer.

The above phenomenon immediately attracted the attention of science and became the object of numerous studies. Outstanding scholars have repeatedly stressed the relevance of a profound scientific study of Mann's mythological intuition; for example, according to K. Kerényi, science lags behind literature in this aspect.

However, the The problem is that the phenomenon has not been systemically analysed from a scientific point of view for many decades. The humanization of the myth was revealed only in the specific works of certain authors.

However, the work by J. Cușnir is relevant due to the need to eliminate an obvious gap in such a range of problems as the correlation between myth and literature and a number of other interdisciplinary factors.

As the experience of research by J. Cușnir demonstrates, developing a systematic concept of the phenomenon requires a considerable combination of diverse scientific achievements (at least such names as C. Geertz, N. Frye, O. Freidenberg, M. Bakhtin, V. Propp, E. Cassirer, K. Kerényi, C. G. Jung, M. Eliade, C. Levi-Strauss, A. Schweitzer, E. Fromm, V. Frankl, N. Berdyaev, H. Ortega-i-Gasset, K. Jaspers, and K. Hübner

should be mentioned) and the degree of awareness which used to be unavailable to science for a long while.

Based on these discoveries, the author of the monograph develops a special *concept of humanization myth*.

Using a number of its components as a literary toolkit (including *totem/non-totem* dichotomy, the myth of laughter, the myth of abolition of death as a *non-totem*, and the scheme of evolution of ancient mythological consciousness in the aspect of the humanization of the myth), the author achieves the goal, i.e. reveals the existence of the humanization of the myth as a holistic and uniformly verifiable literary phenomenon in the intellectual prose of the twentieth century, developing the discovery made by Th. Mann on the basis of a systematic comparative study of a number of representative works.

Each of the six chapters of the work consistently solves one of the tasks leading to the achievement of the goal, as evidenced by their brief description provided below.

The first chapter examines the situation in the sphere of research, interpreting its theoretical aspects in different ways.

From the second to the fifth chapter, the invariant nature of the phenomenon to variations of interference of basic mythologems of the texts examined and variations in the correlations of the chronotope, composition, interpretation of intellectual prose with the chronotope, composition and interpretation inherent in its basic mythologems are identified. This is achieved out by means of a systemic comparative

analysis of the works by authors such as Th. Mann, R. Akutagawa, Yu. Aleshkovsky, J. L. Borges, R. Walser, H. Hesse, F. Dürrenmatt, A. Camus, F. Kafka, T. Pratchett, G. Stein, K. Čapek, G. K. Chesterton, M. Sebastian, A. Bitov, D. Kharms, and V. Nabokov.

In particular, the fact revealed by the author using the example of *The Gentle Lena*, the novel by Gertrude Stein, is quite interesting: humanization of myth can be well transposed when translated from one language to another (Perhaps this phenomenon inherits the corresponding transposability of the myth revealed by Cl. Levi-Strauss). The interpretation of this novel as a text on the ancient Greek myth of Demeter-Persephone in an almost detailed way is unusual, but convincing, though Gertrude Stein herself, apparently, was unaware of it (This is one of the examples of the Jungian "collective unconscious" and the "memory of the genre" as described by Bakhtin revealed by the author of the monograph in the intellectual prose of the twentieth century).

The sixth chapter of the study confirms the author's hypothesis about the effectiveness of applying the "central thesis" by Northrop Frye to the literary phenomenon of the humanization of the myth in intellectual prose for its comparative analysis (According to this thesis, mythology is inherited, transmitted, and transformed through literature, and the structures of myth continue to shape the literary structures).

The author succeeds in doing this by using the example of such a basic mythologem as apocatastasis (the universal salvation and restoration). Considerable attention to it was paid by C.G. Jung. Its ultimate version was considered by Origen: the salvation for "everyone", which extends even to the devil, but after the "aeons". In this aspect of the humanization of the myth, the sixth chapter analyses the "aeon of Borges-Swedenborg", the "aeon of Dürrenmatt", the "aeon of Bitov", and the "aeon of Kafka". It is demonstrated that the humanization of the myth in the examined intellectual prose is shown through the laughter manner, whereas striving towards the metonymic "salvation" of the fantastic protagonists is implicitly subordinated to the task of the extreme emancipation of each individual essence from any evil, even if it is chosen voluntarily.

Special attention is drawn to the interpretation of novels such as *The Luzhin Defense* (1929) by V. Nabokov and *Accidental (The accident)* (1940) by M. Sebastian as implicitly apokatastic, where the concept of "everything" metonymically contains "all" the people, "all" the animals, and "all" the literary characters. It is revealed that the very complex and extremely original structures of the formation of the humanization of the myth in both novels are identical to each other, in spite of the fact that M. Sebastian did not read *The Luzhin Defense*.

Describing the scientific novelty of the monograph, it should first be noted that the literary phenomenon of the humanization of the myth has become the subject of systemic scientific research for the first time. Its scientific definition is formulated, and it is characterized by completeness, internal consistency, and compliance with the ideas of Thomas Mann. In accordance with the definition, a method for uniformly identifying this phenomenon in a literary text has been developed. Due to it, the relevant interpretation model is formulated.

Both the formation of the phenomenon through special dynamic constants and its invariance to the variations of a number of factors are revealed.

For the first time, it is demonstrated that the literary phenomenon of the humanization of the myth exists steadily, representing a tendency; the efficiency of using a number of components regarding the concept of the humanizing of the myth as a literary toolkit is shown.

A special type of basic mythologems of the literary text (new modifications of the ancient mythologems created during the formation of the humanization of the myth and determined precisely by the basic laws of mythological consciousness) and their particular subtype (lost mythologems partially recreated by the literary text) are identified. The existence of the humanization of the myth has been demonstrated in the cases of both explicit and implicit basic mythologies.

*The Phenomenon of the Humanization of the Myth in the Twentieth Century Intellectual Prose*, the monograph by Jozefina Cuşnir, Doctor Habilitat of Philology, is of interest to specialists in philology and a number of other spheres since it

opens up a number of diverse multidisciplinary perspectives.

Therefore, the components of the concept of the humanization of the myth (including its dynamic constants) can be successfully applied as tools in the various spheres of humanitarian knowledge.

The research as a whole can be used in different aspects as an interpretative model within the framework of such scientific subjects as the theory

of literature, comparative literature studies, narratology, comparative mythology, the philosophy of culture, folklore studies, cognitive linguistics, cultural anthropology, psychology, etc.

The combination of ideas presented in this monograph which comprise the concept of "the humanization of the myth" can serve as a basis for the development of the essential aspects related to the concept of "the new humanism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (UNESCO).