



**ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКАЯ, ПРИКЛАДНАЯ И СРАВНИТЕЛЬНО-СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНАЯ
ЛИНГВИСТИКА/THEORETICAL, APPLIED AND COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS**

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PSEUDOSCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE AS A BASIS FOR REMYTHOLOGIZATION

Research article

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Abstract

In modern society there is an unprecedented increase in the popularity of pseudoscientific ideas, which is an essential socio-cultural phenomenon. This growth is facilitated by the mass media, ensuring the rapid content distribution. Promotion mechanisms contribute to the rapid spread of ideas affecting the emotional sphere to the detriment of verifiable data. The article is devoted to the description of the remythologization process for public consciousness. It notes that at present the new form of mythological narrative has been formed — the neomyth. The paradox lies in the fact that it is created in the rational, scientific and technological society but uses mythological structures, symbols and archetypes to comprehend modern realities. Mythologemes directly related to archetypes are considered and their interpretation in modern conditions is presented.

Keywords: remythologization, pseudoscientific discourse, neo-myth, mythologeme, archetype.

ПСЕВДОНАУЧНЫЙ ДИСКУРС КАК ОСНОВА ДЛЯ РЕМИФОЛОГИЗАЦИИ

Научная статья

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Аннотация

В современном обществе наблюдается беспрецедентный рост популярности псевдонаучных идей, что является существенным социокультурным феноменом. Этому росту способствуют средства массовой информации, обеспечивающие быстрое распространение контента. Механизмы продвижения способствуют стремительному распространению идей, затрагивающих эмоциональную сферу, в ущерб верифицируемым данным. Статья посвящена описанию процесса ремифологизации общественного сознания, в ней отмечается, что в настоящее время сформировалась новая форма мифологического повествования — неомиф. Парадокс заключается в том, что он создаётся в условиях рационального, научно-технического общества, однако использует мифологические структуры, символы и архетипы для осмысления современных реалий. Рассматриваются мифологемы, непосредственно связанные с архетипами и представляются их трактовка в современных условиях.

Ключевые слова: ремифологизация, псевдонаучный дискурс, неомиф, мифологема, архетип.

Introduction

In modern society there is a steady increase in the popularity of pseudoscientific ideas which is a complex socio-cultural phenomenon caused by the combination of many factors. The key among them is the psychological human need to find simple and understandable explanations for complex scientific, social, political and economic phenomena that people encounter in everyday life. In conditions of instability, lack of confidence in the future and decrease in the degree of trust in official institutions, people are increasingly turning to alternative sources of information which contributes to the widespread use of pseudoscientific ideas.

An important role in this is played by the Internet and social networks which ensure the unprecedented speed of information dissemination. Content promotion mechanisms contribute to the rapid spread of ideas appealing primarily to the emotional sphere, often to the detriment of verifiable data.

The study examines the mythologeme and its role in pseudoscientific discourse. The mythologeme, being a structural unit of mythological narrative and a concrete embodiment of an archetype, is an ideal tool for creating neo-myths due to its rapid adaptability to modern realities.

The relevance of the theme is due to the studying of the mythologization mechanisms and functioning of mythologies allows for deeper understanding of the modern information society nature where the rational and irrational are closely intertwined. Despite the significant number of works devoted to the analysis of individual pseudoscientific trends, the comprehensive study of mythologemes as the systemic tool for the pseudoscientific narratives formation remains insufficiently studied.

The scientific novelty of the article consists in analyzing the mechanisms for functioning of mythologemes in the structure of modern pseudoscientific discourse as well as in identifying the specifics of their transformation under the digitalization influence and information abundance.

The purpose of the study is to identify and theoretically substantiate the role of mythologemes as structure-forming elements for modern pseudoscientific discourse.

In accordance with this goal, the theoretical significance of the work is to deepen the understanding of the relationship between the archetypes of the collective unconscious, mythological structures and modern forms of non-scientific knowledge. The practical significance of the research is determined by the possibility of using its results to develop effective strategies to counter the spread of pseudoscientific ideas as well as to develop media literacy and critical thinking in an educational environment.

The research is based on the idea that pseudoscientific texts have become the bases for remythologization. They reflect the tendency of the linguocultural communities to conceive the changing reality by means of neo-myths construction. Such new myths use mythologemes and archetypes to present alternative guidelines and explanations when the traditional approaches to reality interpretation become ineffective. The authors used continuous sampling, contextual and semantic analysis, as well as the descriptive method to handle the empirical material.

Main results

Nowadays there is an intensive remythologization of public consciousness, a kind of reanimation for mythical plots [1], the return of myth as a means of the holistic, intuitive, comprehensive understanding of the world. This is not the return of myth in its archaic form but its transformation and adaptation to new realities.

Myth, being one of the most ancient forms for social thinking, is the distorted reflection of objective reality [2]. S.A. Pitina emphasizes that myth is "the holistic mass experience and interpretation of reality using sensory–visual images, considered independent phenomena of reality" [3, P. 16].

Due to its universal character, myth is able to connect various phenomena of philosophy, religion, morality, literature, art, history, science, politics into a single whole [4, P. 10]. As E. D. Pavlova notes, "the mass consciousness is irrational and mythological in nature and therefore, their management is based on knowledge for the structure of myths and the archetypes underlying them; the myth symbolism most vividly reflects the unconscious aspirations and mass needs" [5, P. 61].

According to Russian philologist V.E. Chernyavskaya, reliance on the authority of science plays the special role among linguistic means of speech influence. A strong influencing effect is achieved by creating the scientific statement [6, P. 56].

The mimicry of pseudoscientific doctrines under legitimate scientific theories is achieved through the use of special terminology and imitation of scientific methodological apparatus which makes it difficult to critically assess the reliability of the information received. Mimicry does not happen by itself; it is the result of purposefully constructing the special language and style of communication forming the pseudoscientific discourse.

In pseudoscientific discourse, functions such as receiving, transmitting and storing objective and reliable information, are lost, since the pseudoscientific text imitates only the plan of expression for the scientific text while the plan of content is de-actualized. The informative function which is the most important for scientific discourse, is transformed in the pseudoscientific discourse into the suggestive one, the main purpose of which is to influence the addressee's psyche, his/her feelings, will and mind [7].

Pseudoscientific statements are created by using scientific terms or words that outwardly imitate scientific terms but, at the same time, do not have the strict definition, are not included in the system of scientific knowledge and are not amenable to objective verification. They create the scientific illusion. However, considering pseudoscientific texts only as a set of logical errors or the use of complex terminology, we see only the outer shell. In order for the pseudoscientific text to be convincing, it needs a plot basis that will be intuitively understandable and emotionally close to a person. In this case, pseudoscientific discourse turns out to be nothing more than a form of modern myth that uses the language of science to satisfy an ancient human need for simple and comprehensive explanations of the world. It is the cultural phenomenon with the mythological nature, but it arises and exists in the society dominated by scientific and rational ways of explaining the world. Unlike archaic myths, which were associated with ancient beliefs and explained the structure of the world through images of gods and heroes, modern myths are formed in the context of mass culture, information technology and global communications. Science itself not only destroys old myths but also participates in the creation of new ones. For example, scientific discoveries in such sciences as quantum physics, genetics and space generate new mythologemes and images, which are then replicated in popular culture. If scientific hypotheses and theories are simplified or distorted for a wide audience, they can quickly turn into "myths".

G.F. Garayeva connects remythologization with the contradiction between the person's need for the holistic view of the world, on the one hand, and the limitations of the scientific worldview, on the other [8, P. 240].

Vasilkova V.V., O.A. Kolmakova, O.V. Lyashenko, A.V. Chernysheva, K.M. Olkhovikov and other researchers note that the actualization of myths occurs in crisis time, during uncertainty periods, exacerbation of social conflicts when the person tries to make life more acceptable and create a more pleasant, brighter future [4]. Even in the modern world, myth can help a person perceive reality and navigate it. Olkhovikov notes that special attention should be paid to the emotional significance of the myth: "it is designed to alleviate the emotional stress that the human soul experiences" [9, P. 135].

O.V. Lyashenko emphasizes that the reason for turning to myths is the loss of faith in the progressive development of society: "in the age of science, many people turn to astrologers and clairvoyants in search of solutions to their life problems...



Having lost faith in themselves and scientific knowledge, people are looking for at least some chance to find support in life" [2, P. 204]. In addition, the researcher notes that re-mythologization is associated not only with a lack of information but also with an overabundance of it.

The media, and new media, in particular, play a special role in creating myths. They are able to create and broadcast "not just disparate myths but the special mythological reality that begins to be perceived by man as truth and objective reality" [4]. The created myths play the key role in the formation and transformation of collective memory and identity, offering different interpretations of the past and present.

At the moment myth can be used as a powerful creative resource. V.V. Vasilkova identifies two ways of functioning for myth in modern society: "either mythological patterns are reproduced in the unconscious archetypal structures of modern man (communities) or they are consciously constructed as rational concepts pursuing certain goals" [10, P. 19–20]. Modern myths can serve the manipulative function. This is evidenced by the works of K.M. Olkhovikov, who emphasizes that "the current myth is an ambiguous interweaving of creativity and manipulation" [9, P. 133].

Many researchers note that at the turn of the XX–XXI centuries, the new form of mythological narrative was formed — the neomyth. Unlike traditional myth, neo-myth is created in the rational, scientific and technological society but uses mythological structures, symbols and archetypes to comprehend modern realities, values and problems.

G.S. Devnina notes that the neomyth differs from the classical myth in that it has clearly manifested artificial structure [11, P. 62–63].

Neomyth is a tool for transiting from the information society to the information national society, i.e., the society in which the creation, processing and transmission of information are fundamental sources of power.

To understand the inner myth structure and the reason for its appeal, it is necessary to move from analyzing the text to analyzing mythologemes — those fundamental plots and images that underlie it. An integral element of the mythological plot is the mythologeme. There are a lot of approaches to the study of this term. So, Erkenova A.N. understands the term a mythologeme as "the structural unit of mythological discourse presenting a highly informative element that carries the key meanings and the main meaning of the mythological system" acting as the basis for the formation and transmission of cultural, religious and ideological concepts..." [12, P. 35]. From the point of view the cognitive science, a mythologeme is "an element of a naive world view acting as the result of its cognitive development" [13, P. 210].

A mythologeme is a specific interpretation of an archetype [14, P. 17]. On the one hand, it refers to the past, and on the other hand, it reflects the present in a special way, broadcasting stereotypes of the collective consciousness.

Unlike universal and timeless archetypes, mythologemes may differ from different cultures and eras, but they always carry a core of archetypal meaning.

It is this flexibility and cultural adaptability of mythologemes that make them the ideal tool for creating neo-myths in the modern era. In the digital environment and the information excess, old archetypal plots are easily repackaged and presented as the new scientific or esoteric discoveries.

For example, the activities of the American Institute of Vedic Research which is engaged in the "scientific development" Astrology of Seers (Vedic Astrology) is the textbook example of how the digital environment and information excess contribute to the legitimization and dissemination of neo-myths under the guise of science [15].

This organization relies on the common cognitive distortion: an appeal to authority. The use of the word "institute" in the title serves as a psychological trigger that automatically creates the illusion of scientific knowledge in the audience.

The main activity of the Institute is focused on the study, teaching and promotion of Vedic knowledge. It is an interdisciplinary approach combining several traditional Indian systems. It is not surprising that there is such a high interest in these teachings in the West today.

Carl Jung also pointed out in his works, including in the book "Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious" that "We are looking for effective images, thought forms which can calm the anxiety of the heart and mind and find the treasures of the East" [16].

The scientist, without giving an unambiguous assessment, described a typical Western person striving for knowledge of the East through the prism of the crisis for individuality and the search for lost integrity. Jung warned that for a Westerner, direct transfer of Eastern practices can be dangerous. Unlike an Oriental, for whom the collective unconscious is the living reality (for example, belief in reincarnation), for the Westerner it is only an intellectual concept or fantasy. An attempt to become "oriental" without understanding one's own cultural archetypes leads to separation from one's own roots.

It is the phenomenon of "intellectual borrowing" and the substitution of living faith by mechanistic rituals that is vividly illustrated in educational materials on Vedic Astrology. Let us look at how this manifests itself in concrete examples of mythologemes used in the pseudoscientific text "Astrology of the Seers. Correspondence course of Vedic Astrology" [15].

One of the most striking mythologemes used in pseudoscientific discourse is "the creator giving the birth to people and all the forces of nature." As N. V. Shulga notes, this is the most ancient mythological image [17]. The archetype of the creator functions in the texts on Vedic Astrology which gives the beginning to all things. So, according to pseudoscientific texts, the creator of the universe is the god Bharmha correlated with the Sun. The mythologeme uses this archetype to explain the existence of four seasons and four elements because this god has four faces: "In Vedic Astrology the Sun is personified with the creator of the Universe Brahma who has 4 faces, is the cause of the four seasons and the four basic elements" [16, P. 16].

Mythologemes serve as the cultural language through which archetypes are revealed and built into a single system of meanings. As a rule, archetypal figures do not exist in isolation – they enter into complex relationships often based on opposition. Classic example is the juxtaposition of the Great Mother archetype (the forgiving life giver) and the archetype of the Beloved (Venus), embodying beauty, passion and capriciousness.

There are no specific examples of this classical opposition in the text of the book but there is a general mention that the mythological mankind heritage is replete with plots describing the oppositional relationships dynamics, for example: the rivalry between mother and lover for the attention of a man, the generational conflict "mother — child" or complex alliances

"mother — father". In fact, these mythologemes are projections of real human interactions. They represent an attempt by the collective consciousness to explain and comprehend life dramas, for example, the destructive nature of the confrontation between the roles of "mother" and "lover" in the fate of a man or woman.

The archetype of the Wise Elder Ruler often correlated with Saturn, embodies law, structure, accumulated experience and the preservation of the existing order. He is opposed by the archetype of the Rebel, correlated with Uranus, the embodiment of freedom, sudden enlightenment, the destruction of obsolete forms and a breakthrough into the future.

There are many stories in mythology that illustrate the fundamental opposition. This is the conflict of a father with a rebellious son and the clash of the king with the pretender to the throne and the struggle of the gods with the titans who want to overthrow the old pantheon. These mythologemes serve as projections of real social and personal processes. They explain why revolutions and reforms are inevitable in history and crises in every person's life, related to the need either to obey authority and order or to destroy the imposed framework in order to gain true freedom. The destructive interaction of these two forces is manifested in the fact that the excessive power of the Elder leads to tyranny and stagnation, while the unrestrained rebellion of the Rebel plunges the world into chaos and anarchy.

Consider the following example: the Ashwini Nakshatra is under the control of the Ashwini twin gods whose names etymologically go back to the concept of "horsemen". In the Vedic tradition, they act as pioneers of light, guiding humanity on the path leading to the divine and preceding the first rays of dawn.

The symbolism of the Ashwins is multifaceted in the astrological tradition they are identified with the planets Mercury and Venus as well as with the fundamental dualities of existence — the Sun and Moon or Heaven and Earth. Depicted as boys or children, they represent each other's alter egos.

It is important to note the cultural context: in ancient societies, the birth of twins was considered the manifestation of the divine on earth, which gave them the status of healers. The parallel can be drawn with the Greek Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, associated with the stars in the constellation Gemini, which corresponds to the Vedic Nakshatra Punarvasu.

The deep meaning of this archetype lies in the idea of the unity of opposites. Gemini symbolizes the hidden harmony within duality, necessary for transformation and achieving balance. As Ashwini opens the zodiac cycle, this ability to synthesize becomes the foundation of any successful endeavor. In addition, they embody the karma dual effect generated by human actions [15, P. 8].

The fundamental mythologeme underlying the Vedic astrological worldview is the concept of samsara — the cyclic rebirth of the soul. The ideas system postulates that individual existence is not limited to one life but represents the continuum where the present is a direct consequence of the past and the cause of the future.

Within the framework of the paradigm, person's fate is not the result of chance but acts as the natural result of his/her previous actions. The birth conditions, including the time and place of birth, are interpreted as the karmic legacy accumulated in previous incarnations. The determinism principle is directly reflected in the technical part of astrology. Thus, it is stated: "Nakshatras have three different natures and birth under a certain star is due to the karma of previous life" [18, P. 6].

Thus, the astrological chart (horoscope) acquires the status not so much of the tool for predicting probable events as of the "diagnosis" reflecting the innate karmic potential of a personality and its main life tasks to be worked out in the current incarnation.

In the book, the Vedic astrological system is presented not as a set of technical rules but as a holistic cosmology based on a number of fundamental mythologemes. In addition to the concept of karmic rebirth, the text reveals in detail the mythologeme of the divine hierarchy and the pantheon where the central place in the system is occupied by the idea of planets, Grahas. They are not referred to as impersonal astronomical bodies but as manifestations of specific divine forces. The mythologeme builds the hierarchical structure of the cosmos, where each celestial body is ruled by the personified deity with a unique character and sphere of influence. For example, the Sun (Surya) is personified as the god Agni or Shiva, symbolizing consciousness, soul (Atman), and life force. Moon (Chandra) is identified with the water goddess Parvati, personifying the mind (manas), emotions and psychic sphere.

Mars, Saturn, Rahu, Ketu are assigned the role of pest planets. Formidable deities are represented by Skanda — the god of war, Yama — the god of death, Durga and demons that mythologically substantiates their role as sources of obstacles, lessons and transformations in the horoscope. This system allows us to interpret astrological influences through the prism of the mythological narrative about the interaction of the gods.

The mythologeme of the unity microcosm and macrocosm is of great interest, here the key principle of Vedic thought — "Yajur" (sacrifice) and "Purusha" (Cosmic Man) is projected onto the astrological chart. The mythologeme asserts an isomorphism between the structure of the universe and the inner world of man. The horoscope is considered as the microcosmic chart reflecting macrocosmic laws. The position of the planets in the signs and houses symbolizes not just external events but the distribution of universal energies within the psyche and the fate of the individual.

Next, consider the mythologeme of harmonization through ritual (Yagya). The most important part of the teaching is the mythologeme about the possibility of correcting unfavorable karma. The text claims that the negative influence of planets is not a fatality but a disharmony that can be corrected.

The main tool for this is the ritual of Yagya (or Yajna) — a Vedic sacrifice to fire. Mythologically, this process is described as making the contract or offering gifts to the respective planetary deities to appease their anger or receive blessings. This transforms astrology from the passive predictive discipline into the active magico-religious practice of destiny management.

The book contains the mythologeme connecting the cardinal directions, body parts and elements with specific planetary energies. For example, the Sun rules the east, the Moon rules the northwest and Mars rules the south. This system creates an image of the universe as a living, spiritual organism where all the elements are interconnected and permeated by the divine presence. Similarly, the human body is viewed as a temple in which the chakras and energy channels resonate with cosmic rhythms.



The author pays considerable attention to the mythologeme of the magic numbers and symbols (Yantra) where reality is governed by hidden numerical and geometric laws. Each planet has its own numerical yantra (magic square) which is a visible embodiment of its energy structure. The use of these yantras in meditation or rituals is seen as a way to connect directly to the power planet. This translates abstract astrological concepts into the realm of practical magic and symbol work.

Conclusion

The conducted research allows us to conclude about the growing popularity of pseudoscientific ideas in modern society is a natural consequence for socio-cultural transformations. In conditions of instability and an overabundance of information, a person intuitively seeks support in simplified, holistic and emotionally coloured systems of explaining the world. It is this need that is effectively satisfied by neo-myths which are actively constructed within the framework of pseudoscientific discourse.

Mythologemes are the central instrument of this process. The analysis showed that they are not simple relic of the past but are dynamic semantic structures capable of easy adaptation. Acting as the "building blocks" of neo-myths, mythologemes give pseudoscientific concepts the appearance of reliable and systematic information.

Thus, mythologemes play the key role in the formation and dissemination of pseudoscientific discourse. They provide pseudoscientific ideas with inner harmony, explanatory power and emotional appeal which make mythologemes highly sought-after by mass audience. In the context of the digitalization of society, the spread of mythologemes is becoming an unprecedented character.

It should be noted that the results of the study have both theoretical and practical value. On the one hand, they contribute to the development of theoretical research in the field of linguistics, on the other hand, the findings can be used in the development of educational programs for the development of critical thinking. Prospects for further research are seen in more detailed analysis of specific cases for the functioning of the mythologemes in various segments of pseudoscientific discourse as well as in studying the effectiveness of methods to counteract their influence. The article contributes to deeper understanding for the remythologization mechanisms of public consciousness in the 21st century.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Рецензия

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Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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