

THE MYTHOLOGICAL BASIS OF POETIC METAPHOR

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Abstract: The article highlights the connections between poetic metaphors found in Ukrainian poetic texts and myths. It emphasizes that metaphor serves as both a means and a result of transforming myth into familiar forms of consciousness. Metaphors of mythological origin are characterized as an integral element of the poetic text. The main focus is made on metaphors that have connections with the myths of Slavic peoples. It is demonstrated that metaphors of mythological origin form a substratum layer of Ukrainian poetry. A classification of the recorded metaphors by their source of origin is proposed. The following types of metaphors are distinguished and analyzed: (1) metaphors related to myths about the earth, (2) metaphors arising from astral-themed myths, (3) metaphors reflecting mythological representations of the plant and animal world (totemic myths), and (4) metaphors formed on the basis of myths about humans, their life and death (anthropogenic myths). It is emphasized that metaphors of mythological origin, used in the poetic text, ensure the continuity of the literary tradition while simultaneously being enriched by the realities of the new environment, stimulating the formation of new meanings.

Keywords: metaphor; myth; text; poetic text; image; imagery; stylistics.

1 Introduction

The interrelationship between metaphor and myth is one of the most complex problems in contemporary humanities. The complexity lies not only in the ambiguity of interpreting the analyzed phenomena but also in the fact that understanding their interaction delves into the even more intricate issue of the relationship between language and thought. In analyzing the triad of language – metaphor – myth, researchers have considered metaphor in connection with mythological consciousness [12], as a linguistic phenomenon [16], argued that the metaphorical nature of language gives rise to myth [12; 15], and conversely, that language has inherited metaphors from myth [9; 17; 18; 21]. Despite the differences, and sometimes even oppositions in viewpoints, most scholars recognize metaphor as a linking element between language and myth.

In contemporary science, it has become axiomatic that metaphor is ontologically connected with both language and thought – humans not only express their thoughts through metaphors but also think with them. It has been proven that metaphor is an expression of the unique feature of human linguistic thinking to notice similarities between different objects and their classes. This is a key property in the processes of world cognition, since acquiring knowledge about the environment involves identifying similarities between the familiar and the unfamiliar, in order to understand the unknown through the known. This mechanism constitutes the essence of metaphor as a tool for transforming the cognizable into comprehensible forms. The results of cognitive activity can be preserved for a long time in the form of metaphors, which, on the one hand, reflect the specifics of conceptualizing reality within a particular worldview system, and on the other, define the specifics of further cognition.

A part of the metaphors in contemporary Ukrainian language, which belongs to traditional figurative means, is genetically linked to myth, although this connection is not always obvious.

The aim of the research is to identify and substantiate the mythological basis of metaphors in Ukrainian poetry, and to clarify their stylistic functions in poetic texts.

2 Literature review

In most studies, the problem of metaphor is considered in connection with logical thinking, which operates with words and associated concepts that are relatively autonomous in space and time. In mythological thinking, identification occurs at the level of the objects themselves, and not at the level of names [1; 16]. The reason for perceiving a word not as a conditional designation of some object, but as part of it was the syncretism of the world's reflection in the human psyche. In the early stages of human development, there was no dualism between mythological and logical thinking, as indicated by E. Cassirer and other researchers. Myth for the primitive person was reality, and what modern people perceive as imagery was the perception of the world in the form of equivalences and repetitions. Mythological identification implies the transformation of the object itself in a specific space and time [1]. Metaphor, however, is always oriented towards the object because in it the main subject (the signified) retains its objectivity, while the auxiliary subject (the signifier; serving for comparison) acquires a signifying meaning. Metaphor as a concept did not arise in the process of mythological cognition but emerged as a result of the scientific understanding of linguistic phenomena; it is a natural translation of myth into familiar forms of human consciousness [1]. In other words, it is a term used to denote the real historical features of human speech-thinking activity.

In myths, general ideas about the surrounding world appear in a concrete-sensory, figurative form. This method of reflecting the surrounding world is also characteristic of art, including verbal art, which has led to the widespread use of metaphors in literary works. The common feature of myth and artistic literature served as the basis for their convergence and even identification [3; 4]. However, many researchers refute this notion [1; 14; 16]. Poetry, like all artistic literature, although genetically related to myth, did not arise simultaneously with it. It is a means of preserving and transforming mythological concepts over time, which appeared in the later stages of societal development when the form of expression of content became significant [1; 16].

The difference between myth and poetry, according to researchers, lies in the mode of thinking. O. Potebnia emphasized that in myth, “the image is considered objective and, therefore, completely transferred to the meaning and serves as the basis for further conclusions about the properties of the signified”, the allegory of the image exists but is not realized by the subject [16]. One of the important features of poetry that distinguishes it from myth is the conscious use by the artist of different variants of form. In myths, unlike poetry, there are uncontrolled variations in interpretations [13; 16].

Myths, as it is known, originated and functioned in archaic cultures, but they did not completely disappear later. Mythologism, both as an artistic tool and as a related worldview, is a characteristic phenomenon of 20th-century literature and continues in 21st-century literature. In this regard, the widespread use of metaphors of mythological origin in Ukrainian poetry of this period seems quite natural. However, they are rarely a means of mythologization; more often, they are figurative units that do not have an obvious connection with myth but to some extent express the peculiarities of Ukrainian perception of the world.

With the advent of postmodernism, the idea gained popularity that any manifestation of myth reflects the worldview of the era and has certain cultural significance, as myth does not lose the properties of its originally perfect form but changes under the influence of external factors.

The mythological beliefs of Ukrainians are reflected in folk customs, rituals, beliefs, and so on, which, although having undergone significant transformations over time, have still been preserved to this day. According to V. Davydiuk, “their

worldview basis may have much in common with similar examples from other tribes and peoples.

However, this commonality is caused not so much by cultural borrowings but rather by the commonality of ethnocultural development" [5].

In Ukrainian folklore and artistic literature, mythologism is manifested in images, plots, motifs, and more. Mythological content sometimes emerges in figurative means, particularly metaphors, similes, epithets, and it may not be consciously recognized by either the author or the reader. Identifying metaphors of mythological origin requires the application of appropriate research methods and techniques.

3 Materials and Methods

The poetic text is the primary sphere for the creation and functioning of metaphor. The emergence of poetry is driven by the development of human thought and worldview, during which mythological personification of natural phenomena transformed into poetic representation of the surrounding world. Metaphor became both the means and the result of transforming myth into familiar forms of consciousness.

Given this, the research sources were texts of Ukrainian poetry from the 20th to early 21st centuries, recorded in various authorial collections, as well as V. Zhaivoronok's dictionary "Signs of Ukrainian Ethnoculture" (2006) and V. Voitovych's "Ukrainian Mythology" (2014). The focus was on metaphors that have connections with the myths of Slavic peoples.

According to the specifics of the research subject, various methods and techniques were applied:

the technique of continuous selection of metaphors of mythological origin to form a corpus of contexts for further analysis;

metaphorical modeling for the formalized and simplified representation of basic models and for studying the processes of creating derivative metaphors, the main directions, and ways of developing metaphorical models in the analyzed texts;

comparative-typological method using the technique of establishing tertium comparationis (basis of comparison) – the functional-semantic means of expressing metaphor;

the technique of comparative bilateral, semasiological interpretation, subordinated to the methodology of parallel research, which consists of the step-by-step use of:

- 1) *linguistic description*, including techniques of primary and secondary segmentation and internal interpretation, aimed at highlighting and systematizing the empirical research base – the semantic-grammatical means of expressing metaphor;
- 2) *conceptual-interpretative analysis* of metaphorical models, which involves considering the macro- and microcontext to interpret their content.

4 Results and Discussion

Myths reflect the earliest human perceptions of the surrounding world, cosmos and chaos, space and time, the mystery of birth and death, human destiny, orientation in the natural environment, and coexistence with other people, among others. These perceptions are succinctly embodied in metaphors formed through the condensation of mythological content.

Metaphors of mythological origin, recorded in poetic texts, exhibit heterogeneity along several parameters.

The main ones are: the heterogeneity of (1) content and (2) form, (3) contextual conditionality of meaning, and (4) functions performed in the texts. In accordance with the aim and objectives of the study, a classification of metaphors by their source of origin has been developed, distinguishing the following: (1)

metaphors related to myths about the earth, (2) metaphors arising from myths with astral themes, (3) metaphors reflecting mythological perceptions of the plant and animal world (totemic myths), and (4) metaphors formed based on myths about humans, their life, and death (anthropogenic myths) (see Figure 1).

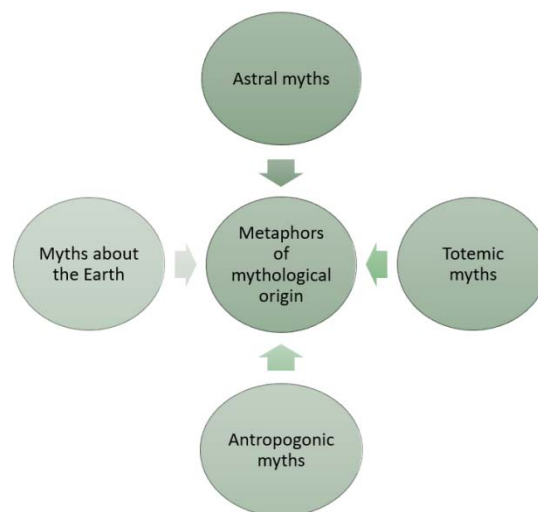


Figure 1. Main Sources of Metaphors of Mythological Origin

The proposed classification covers the most numerous, yet semantically and structurally heterogeneous groups of metaphors found in Ukrainian poetic texts. Within each class, several subgroups of metaphors are distinguished, each united by a fundamental metaphorical model. The most homogeneous in terms of motivational basis are the metaphors reflecting mythological conceptions of the earth, which are therefore highlighted in a separate class.

Metaphors that relate to myths about the earth

In archaic cultures, there was a wealth of tribal beliefs and cults open to mutual influences, but a common element among them was the cult of the Mother Goddess. In pagan Rus, her variants included Mother Earth and Mother Nature, associated with the chthonic cults of matriarchal religions. This ancient belief is invoked by the Ukrainian poet B.I. Antonych, a "life-loving pagan," who writes: "You worship only the earth, the earth of a hundred colors, as if this dream!" These words continue the Ukrainian poetic tradition, reflected in the lines of the Ukrainian literature classic I. Franko: "Earth, my all-fruitful mother, // Powers that dwell in your deep, // A drop to stand stronger in battle, // Grant me too!"

Gradually, the cult of the Earth Mother was replaced by the Uranian cult of the gods of patriarchal religions, which later gave rise to the monotheism of the Christian church, ultimately rejecting the worship of ancient deities of life and fertility. However, the echo of pre-Christian beliefs is seen in the metaphorical model of *woman, mother* → *earth*. Over time, the connection with pagan culture weakened, but the deep respect Ukrainians hold for the earth did not vanish. The traditional epithet of "holy" in Ukrainian literature, though not associated with the Mother Goddess cult, still signifies a high reverence for the earth. This metaphorical model is highly productive in Ukrainian literature. Through the personified image of the earth, according to S. Yermolenko, "the philosophy of Ukrainian vitalism is manifested" [22]. In Ukrainian poetry, this model is predominantly realized as a binary metaphor of *mother earth*. The meaning of the basic metaphor in individual linguistic contexts is refreshed through its combination with other lexical and grammatical elements of the text, which develop new meanings and perform complex functions of figurative expression. For example, the addition of an adjectival component to the structure of the metaphor clarifies and specifies its content, and, according to the connotation of the

adjective, enriches it with national and cultural color: “*Oh you, earth, farmer’s mother, // Girded with blue rivers, // In a green high headdress, // In a lacy Chinese garment, // In a skirt adorned with bright flowers*” (M. Rylskiy).

As a result of the interaction between the individual and the collective, we examine metaphors where the feminine image of the earth is interpreted as *bride-earth*, *girl-earth*, and is enriched with additional associative and imagery details: “*And the earth – a bride in milky bloom*” (E. Malaniuk); “*The earth, spinning a hula-hoop of orbits, // Must still be quite a girl to him*” (L. Kostenko).

In poetic language, the primary subject of the metaphorical transfer of *woman, mother* → *earth* is often the Homeland or Ukraine. For example, the personification of Ukraine as a woman, mother, with all the dramatic aspects of the female fate, is widely represented in the poems of P. Tychyna such as “The Sorrowful Mother,” “My Madonna”, and others. This metaphor is also present in the collection “Plow”. Scholar M. Ilnytskyi emphasizes: “It should be noted that Soviet literary criticism artificially attributed Tychyna’s collection ‘Plow’ to the Bolshevik revolution. In reality, it was a book about our, about the national revolution, in which Ukraine sought to raise its own Moses, its own Messiah, but... ‘could not endure the agony’. It is worth reading, once again and impartially, at least the cycle ‘My Madonna’ – and in the image of the ‘sinful’, ‘naked’ maiden will appear the traits of the later Malaniuk’s Earth Madonna” [10].

In the works of E. Malaniuk, the image of the native land achieves a profound artistic and philosophical interpretation. For the poet, the land is not a *mother* but a *beloved* or a *harlot*, *sacred* or *witch*. The artist expresses an ambivalent feeling of love and hatred towards his native land. Driven by the idea of Ukrainian statehood, E. Malaniuk contrasts himself and his lyrical hero with the entire nation, continuing a cultural tradition initiated by T. Shevchenko, P. Kulish, and I. Franko. In the monologues addressed to the personified image of the native land, infused with a feminine principle, love and hatred, curses and hymns intertwine. The rebellious nature of the lyrical hero in E. Malaniuk’s poetry is manifested through confrontation, conflict, denial, and rejection. This rebellion against a harsh reality engenders a profound duality in the personification of the native land and the emotional source of the terrible curse directed towards it. It is noteworthy that the modern negative emotional connotation of the witch image, with which E. Malaniuk associates his native land, has been shaped by the influence of Christianity, which was intolerant of pagan beliefs. In pre-Christian mythology, a witch is not a servant of the devil but a being that maintains the balance between light and darkness. The word “*vidma*” (*witch*) is related to “*vidaty*” (*wit*), which is an iterative form of the Proto-Slavic “*vsty*” (“to know”), derived from the Indo-European **vēd̥ti* (**vēd̥-* “knowledge”). This is also indicated by the Polish researcher A. Gejsthor: “The sorceress or witch (Polish: *wiedźma*, Old Polish: *wiedma*, meaning ‘one who knows’) practices magic and divination. This phenomenon and this lexical root originate not from Proto-Slavic but from Proto-Indo-European” [8].

According to ancient beliefs, the earth gives birth to people and takes them back into its womb after death [8]. “The Mother is the dominant figure where magical transformation and resurrection occur, as well as in the underworld with its inhabitants. In a negative sense, the archetype of the Mother can signify something mysterious, enigmatic, dark, an abyss, the world of the dead, everything that engulfs, tempts, and poisons, that which fills one with horror and is inevitable like fate. <...> There are three most important aspects of the Mother: Her fertile and benevolent Deity, Her orgiastic emotionality, and Her Stygian depths” [11]. In this context, the mythological nature of the given metaphors is undeniable: *It has always been this way – and still is // The earth caresses its children* (P. Filipovych); *and, hey, in Bavaria by the umbilical cord // the earth tugged at me just now* (T. Osmachka); *I am strong in body, pure in spirit: // In*

me flows the blood of my land (D. Pavlychko); *To enter into the mother’s womb again // and be reborn someday* (I. Kalynets).

Metaphors arising from myths of astral themes

The poetic representation of the sky and celestial bodies in Ukrainian literature is significantly influenced by folkloric tradition, formed on East Slavic mythology.

A distinct subject of depiction in Ukrainian poetry is the sky. In mythology, the Sky is closely but controversially connected with the Earth. Among other beliefs, there was the notion that the Sky and the Earth are married [20; 23]. This logically aligns with the interpretation of *rain* as an act of union between *the Sky* (male) and *the Earth* (female). Rain “in ancient mythology is explained as the result of the union of the sky with the earth (specifically through the rainbow – ‘into the paradise arch’ – water rises to the clouds, and from there falls as rain)” [23]. In contemporary Ukrainian poetry, we find extended metaphors that partially realize this meaning: “*Open your hot bosom, // Mother Earth! The rain will cool you. // It will revive and fertilize, – // And with wheat and barley // With a lush green wave // It will cheer the white villages*” (M. Rylskiy); “*The tropical downpour of love rages – // the wild marriage of earth and sky*” (L. Kostenko). Let us note that this is one of the numerous images of rain in Ukrainian poetry. Mostly, in the analyzed texts, the metaphors of rain are individually authorial and do not have typical realizations. At the same time, the most frequent technique of their creation is personification.

Like other images, *the sky* in Slavic mythology is interpreted in various ways. The models that reflect ancient perceptions are as follows: *water (sea, ocean, lake)* → *sky*; *canvas, fabric* → *sky*; *ceiling* → *sky*; *tent* → *sky*; *bowl* → *sky*. Each of these models served as a basis for creating numerous individual-author metaphors. The most frequent analogy in Ukrainian poetry, according to our observations, is the comparison of the sky with the water element. The motivational basis of this metaphor is the external similarity in terms of spatial (boundless space) and color characteristics. In metaphors, this meaning develops with the weakening of the spatial element and the strengthening of the boundlessness. The sky, analogized with the sea (ocean), has led to the action projection of *flying* → *swimming*. This conceptual metaphor is widely expanded in the scientific and technical sphere (aviation, aircraft, air fleet, spacecraft, spaceport, etc.).

Metaphors that arose based on mythological ideas about the sun, moon, and stars are also among the most frequently used ones in Ukrainian poetry texts and form one of the largest groups. These include, in particular, metaphors formed based on the following models: *eye* → *sun*, *ruler* → *sun*, *mother* → *sun*, *honey* → *sun*, *wheel* → *sun*; *eyes* → *stars*, *eye* → *moon*, *shepherd* → *moon*, *head* → *moon*, etc.

Ancient Ukrainians, like many other peoples, analogized the night celestial bodies (*moon and stars*) with *the eyes of the sky* [20; 23], believing that these “inhabitants of the heavenly vault and representatives of the sacred light-bearing element for pagans” look down on people from the sky [20]. These associations are reflected in the metaphorical model *eye* → *celestial body*, which is widely realized in the language of Ukrainian poetry: “*The moon squints its yellow eye*” (V. Svidzinskyi); “*And the stars look deeply into the eyes*” (V. Svidzinskyi); “*From blond clouds, from silk drapes // The moon looked at the stubble and field*” (M. Zerov); “*The transparent eyes of the sky*” (V. Sosiura); “*The big eye of the moon*” (E. Malaniuk); “*The eyes of the sky*” (Y. Tarnawskiy); “*The sky looks with its eyes, and the earth // sighs in the wind*” (A. Malyshko); “*The sky looked through the star*” (M. Vingranovskiy). These are poetic images that are merely linked by origin to mythology, but over time this connection has weakened or been completely lost.

The sun, which observes earthly life from above, was also imagined as the eye of God in pagan-Christian mythology. The echo of these ancient beliefs is recorded in metaphors: “*Under the sun of Crimea, under its dazzling eye // Intoxicating wine*

flows like a sacrificial stream" (M. Zerov), "The sun fades. From its bright eye // Over the wide fields, over the grove // Streams of crimson light pour" (B. Lepkyi), "And the sun shines with a mysterious eye" (L. Kostenko).

The ancient poetic tradition of depicting the Sun as a deity is also based on the pre-Christian beliefs of the Slavs. According to V. Zhaivoronok, "in pre-Christian times, the Slavs worshiped natural elements – the sun, fire, water; a solar worldview dominated, as ancient people saw the sun as a powerful source of heat and light, upon which their lives and well-being completely depended; the changing seasons were associated with a god who dies and resurrects; the main holidays were dedicated to the sun..." [23]. The aesthetics of sun worship are widely manifested in P. Tychyna's poem "Golden Clamor": "the ancestors offer sacrifices to the sun – // and hence the golden clamor" (P. Tychyna), as well as in the poetic works of his contemporaries and successors: "here descends the white God – the sun" (B.-I. Antonych), "I pray to you, sun, god of fiery clusters" (T. Osmachka), among others. The intertwining of pagan and Christian beliefs is reflected in the metaphor of *the sun golden communion* (B.-I. Antonych), where the sun and its light are analogized with the main Christian sacraments – Holy Communion.

The poetic metaphor "*honey of the sun*" also has a mythological basis, though its meaning is somewhat ambiguous. Narrowly, this metaphor can denote sunlight, and more broadly, the warm air heated by the sun on a summer day. The origin of this metaphor lies in the myth "The Star, the Keys, the Dew, and the Honey", which was studied by O. Potebnia. The essence of the myth is that "The Star unlocks the heavenly gates with a key at dawn and releases the Sun into the sky. The Sun chases the beautiful girl Star, who flees and becomes a well. Holy dew falls to the earth, fertilizing it. Bees drink the dew and bring sweet honey. Life is born" [20]. In the process of transforming the myth into a binary metaphorical construction, both metaphorical and metonymic projections emerged. An important distinction between the myth and the metaphor derived from it is that the myth tells about the birth of life. In the poetic metaphor, this meaning is absent; instead, the tactile and visual characteristics of sunlight are emphasized. However, the analysis of the contexts in which the metaphor is used shows not only an image-associative designation of the properties of sunlight but also an emphasis on its life-giving qualities.

In Ukrainian poetry, the moon is often analogized with a human, as evidenced by the widespread use of somatisms. The most frequently created metaphors of mythological origin follow these models: *eye* → *moon*, *creature / person* → *moon* (*prince* → *moon*, *shepherd* → *moon*), as well as *head* → *moon*, *skull* → *moon*, and others.

The image of *the wind*, which belongs to mythological universals, is associated with astral myths. The personified image of the wind is one of the most commonly used in Ukrainian poetry and has both positive and negative connotations. Whirlwinds and hurricanes in folk beliefs are identified with demonic entities, which is reflected in individual-author metaphors: "This wind – my demon – ruffles the fire..." (V. Herasymiuk). Similar associations underpin metaphors such as: "the wind beats on the drum" (V. Sosiura) and "The shaggy wind-ragged // opens up the fog in the fields, // dances a mad dance, // beats the sun's drum like a shaman" (L. Kostenko). A gentle breeze has a positive axiological coloring: "God's spirit in the breath of the winds" (Yurii Klen); "A light breeze sighs quietly outside the window" (P. Tychyna); "The wind kisses the flowers in the meadows..." (M. Lukiv).

Personification as a type of metaphor is considered to be associated with the primal mythological worldview, preserved to this day in the depths of ethnogenetic memory and archetypes [1]. Since ancient times, humans have seen analogs of their own lives in various manifestations of the surrounding world and unconsciously projected their feelings onto objects and phenomena around them. Reality appeared unalienated from

humans and was described in connection with certain human qualities. This type of metaphor, manifesting in many varieties, determined the development of cultures over a long period. However, with the evolution of cognitive activity, there came an understanding of the limitations of anthropomorphic metaphor as a fundamental regulative principle. Its usage in poetry largely depends on individual-author preferences, the poetic era, the movement, as well as the dominant cultural paradigm of a particular period. For example, in the works of B.-I. Antonych, who had a mythopoetic worldview, nature and celestial bodies are personified.

Metaphors Reflecting Mythological Perceptions of the Plant and Animal World (Totemic Myths)

The most significant plant image embodying the universal concept of the world is the Eternal Tree of Life, or the World Tree. This image is present in the mythology of many peoples, including Ukrainians. The universality of this image is likely connected to its expression of the idea of world order. The upward direction of the tree and most plants symbolizes life and development, while the downward direction represents decline and death. This image is widely represented in Ukrainian folklore, but in the poetry of the analyzed period, metaphors corresponding to it are rare. Instead, various tree metaphors are commonly used. The connection with myths can be traced in metaphors formed by the model *creature / person* → *tree*. It should be noted that in certain cases, this model can be bidirectional, meaning the properties of a creature/person can be projected onto a tree and vice versa.

In the ancient culture of the Eastern Slavs, trees were endowed with supernatural power, and it was believed that a person's fate depended on their union with their native nature. As M. Eliade emphasizes, "A tree was never an object of worship in itself; people honored what was inside it or what it signified for them" [7].

Representatives of the Ukrainian linguistic picture of the world are the images of the *oak*, *cherry*, *linden*, *poplar*, and *willow*, which were sacred in ancient times. According to A. Gieysztor, "The traits of the cult, the rituals of which were performed under the trees, should be associated not with the specific type of tree or its animistic image, but with the sacred power supposedly hidden within it. According to Constantine Porphyrogenitus, 'the Rus' of the 10th century, likely following the ancient tradition of local tribes, when crossing the Dnieper rapids, 'go ashore on the island named after St. George [Khortytzia], where, since there is a huge oak, they offer sacrifices in the form of live birds. Around it, they stick arrows into the ground, lay out bread or meat, or whatever they have with them, according to their customs'. The oak, about 2,000 years old, grew on this island until 1876 – it was in this place that the councils of the Zaporizhzhian Cossacks were once held" [8]. Based on the concept of the oak as the tree of the mighty Perun, numerous metaphors have been formed in Ukrainian poetry: "Oh oak, prince of the woods, worthy monarchal tree // in the autumn crown – the purple of leaves..." (B.-I. Antonych), "my prince oak" (I. Drach), (about oaks) "monarchs of Kyiv lands" (I. Svitlychnyi).

One of the most poetic images in 20th-century Ukrainian poetry is the *willow*, traditionally associated with sorrow, weeping, and water bodies. Deepening the semantics and expanding the collocability of the word, poets created original individual-author images based on the mythopoetic archetype of the willow. For instance, in V. Svidzinskyi's works, willows are the *thoughtful sisters of water*; in P. Tychyna's, *they pray in tears*; in V. Symonenko's writing, *green willows wring their hands*; in V. Stus's works, *willows weep // devoutly bending towards the pond*; in H. Chubach, *silent long-haired willows // also shed a tear from their leaves*. The image of the sorrowful willow is created in P. Tychyna's poem "Flowering Meadow": "Hey, by the road stands a willow, // catching the ringing rain strings, // swaying its branches as if sadly saying: // 'Sorrow, sorrow... // That's how the years, without end // I pluck the strings of

Eternity // I, the lonely willow". A similar image is the willow-harpist in L. Kostenko's poem: "*The rain stretches its autumn strings, // the willow touches those strings with its finger...*" These examples demonstrate, on the one hand, the continuity of the literary tradition, and on the other – the innovative use of poetic archetypes.

The tradition of using animal imagery in contemporary Ukrainian poetry also traces its origins to mythology and folklore, although this connection is not always evident. Some of these metaphors retain meanings consistent with the content of myths, while others have lost this connection. For example, the *falcon* symbolizes "courage, youth, strength, and wisdom. According to ancestral beliefs, it represents the god Rod, the guardian of the 'living fire' and the Tree of Life, a golden-winged bird that brought sparks of heavenly fire to the earth" [20]. The *eagle* is "the king of birds and the lord of the skies", and "in ancient times, it was believed that after death, a brave warrior becomes an eagle" [20]. In contemporary Ukrainian poetry, the metaphors of the *falcon* and the *eagle* traditionally denote brave and strong young men, warriors. These bird images are also associated with freedom, liberation, and victory, leading to the creation of metaphors such as "*the sweep of falcon wings of freedom*" (M. Rylskyi) and "*falcon freedom*" (V. Sosiura). The metaphorical image of the *snake* in contemporary poetry carries a pejorative connotation, signifying an evil, treacherous person. In mythology, this image is multifaceted: "1) the snake associated with water, mountains, it is a collector of tribute, guardian of borders, devourer, kidnapper, Cerberus, etc.; 2) the snake linked to fertility, the earth, feminine generative power, water, the sun on one side, and the domestic hearth, fire in general (especially heavenly fire), as well as with 3) the male fertilizing principle" [20]. Overall, it was associated with changes, transformations, and rebirth. The connection with myths is mainly evident in zoomorphic metaphors formed by the model *animal* → *being/human*.

Zoomorphic metaphors, which carry a distinctly pejorative connotation, are used to discredit or sharply diminish the subject of discourse. It has been observed that in Ukrainian poetry of the first half of the 20th century, zoomorphic metaphors primarily denote people (class enemies, fascists), while in poetic works of the second half of the century, they more often refer to objects and non-object entities. In the texts of recent decades, they also denote specific politicians or political forces. Words functioning as metaphors of negative evaluation include: *beast, hyena, snake (serpent, viper), boa constrictor, dog, fox, spider, octopus*, and others: "*Until we kill the beast – Revenge cuts like a yoke*" (A. Malushko); "*Hyenas of darkness emerged from their lairs*" (E. Andriivska); "*Hence, against the enemy, against the serpent, // the arrow flies – far over there!*" (P. Tychyna); "*He would have pelted you with the rocks of hatred, // you insatiable dogs, cursed traitors!*" (P. Tychyna).

In poetic works, we also find the use of zoomorphic metaphors with meliorative (positive) evaluation: *beast, dove, eagle, bee, butterfly*, etc.: "*words, timid little beasts*" (B. Rubchak); "*Gray dove of evening*" (V. Svidzinsky); "*the bee of your wisdom*" (A. Malushko); "*the butterfly of mood will suddenly be startled*" (I. Kalynets).

A distinct group is comprised of metaphors involving the cognitive structure of *wings*, due to their independent structure of the *bird* existence in mythology, folklore, various forms of art, heraldry, and so on. For millennia, across all cultural traditions, the image of wings has been associated with human spirituality and the life of the soul. Wings are "a solar symbol representing divinity, spiritual nature, action, willpower, mental strength, speed, protection, omnipresence, and the ability to transcend the real world" [20]. Accordingly, in Ukrainian poetry, wings are used to depict the *soul, thought, dream, joy, happiness, hope, intellect*, as well as *will* and *freedom*.

The metaphor "*winged word*" is also used in Ukrainian poetry. According to mythological beliefs, a word is an invisible emanation of the soul. Thus, if the *soul is a bird, then the word*

is the wings of this bird. The metaphorical epithet "*winged*" in relation to the word was first used by Homer and later became a traditional expression in literary art. In Ukrainian poetry, the metaphor "*winged word*" is often modified and enriched with coloristic semantics, notably with attributes like *silver, gray, or white*, which emphasize the significance of the word and its spiritual essence: "*They fly, they fly // Silver-winged words // To the meadow, endlessly covered with white lilies*" (M. Yohansen).

Metaphors based on myths about humans

These metaphors predominantly concern the *heart, soul, fate, death*, as well as individual feelings, such as *love*. In the naive linguistic beliefs of the Ukrainian people, the center of a person's emotional, spiritual, and physical life was the *heart*. In Ukrainian poetry, metaphors involving the heart relate to the internal psychological world of a person, reflecting connections with mythological concepts. Ukrainians have long believed that love, longing, fear, faith, and other emotions are born and reside in the heart. The heart was also associated with moral qualities of a person, such as kindness, conscience, mercy, humanity, and spiritual richness. The folkloric tradition of aestheticizing the *heart*, influenced on one hand by Christian worldview and on the other - by the artistic and aesthetic systems of sentimentalism, romanticism, symbolism, and later modernism, has continued in higher, intellectual forms of Ukrainian culture, particularly in poetry.

The image of the *soul* is also widely represented in Ukrainian poetry, reflecting the internal world of a person. This image is shaped by numerous evaluative and associative meanings of lexical units. M. Zubrytska notes that "the problem of the soul is a mutable play of image and concept, where spatial representations, particularly the geometric opposition of external/internal, prevail. The metaphorical articulation of the external and internal opposition transforms the soul into something mysterious, which neither possesses the poetic strength of its own imagery nor ever reaches a defined definition and simultaneously unambiguous semantics of a scientific concept" [24]. Metaphors reflecting ancient notions of the soul are predominantly formed according to models such as: *being* → *soul, internal substance of a person* → *soul, eye* → *soul, bird* → *soul*, and others.

National-linguistic peculiarities and poetic individuality are most vividly expressed at the level of the signifier (the auxiliary subject) of metaphorical constructions, particularly in its lexical meaning and cultural connotation, as well as in the evaluative criteria set by national-cultural stereotypes. For instance, in the phytomorphic metaphor, *your soul poured down - (Vranishnia vyshnia (Morning cherry))...* (P. Tychyna) the significant component of the construction is the word *cherry*, which is associated in the Ukrainian worldview with life, Ukraine, native land, mother, bride [6]. These associations stem from ancient beliefs and rituals of the Eastern Slavs, where the cherry tree was considered sacred. The white color of the cherry blossom was linked by ancient Ukrainians with the divine, pure, and light, which was regarded as the source of life. The adjective "*vranishnia*" (morning) highlights these qualities. The soul of a person was also considered divine, pure, and light. These attributes of the compared objects form the basis of the individual-author metaphorical reinterpretation of *cherry* → *soul*.

A key concept in both common and individual consciousness that defines a person's interaction with the surrounding world and active or passive stance towards everything that happens to him or those around him is *fate*. This concept is present in all mythological, religious, philosophical, and ethical systems, demonstrating its crucial role in human life and in the life of entire ethnic groups. The image of fate is widely and diversely represented in Ukrainian poetry. Analysis of fate metaphors reveals key characteristics that can be presented as such oppositions: determined / undetermined, constant / changeable, happy / unhappy, favorable / unfavorable. These attributes are fully embodied only in anthropomorphic metaphors, whereas in

metaphors of other types, their manifestation is limited to one or two attributes. Overall, the metaphorization of fate in Ukrainian poetry follows the anthropomorphic type, aligning with a tradition rooted in mythology. Fate metaphors represent various properties, with the most common being spontaneity, unpredictability, and variability.

Death is widely expressed metaphorically in Ukrainian poetry. Literary and philosophical interpretations of this concept have been influenced by existentialist philosophers and writers, who built upon the idea that death, in all its manifestations, renders the moment of human life invaluable, provides an understanding of the fullness and completeness of each moment of existence, and encourages the search for authenticity in one's being-in-the-world [19]. However, even before existentialism became a distinct philosophical movement and later independently of it, this issue was the subject of lyrical and philosophical studies by Ukrainian artists. The metaphorical expression of death in Ukrainian poetry occurs in several aspects: historical-philosophical (death as a social cataclysm, the demise of a people, nation, or state), religious-philosophical (in relation to the essence of the divine, eternity, nature), and existential-philosophical (in connection with the physical, emotional, moral, spiritual, and social existence of the individual). All these aspects are not presented in isolation in poetic texts but often intertwine and complement each other. The death of a person sometimes takes on the characteristics of a planetary catastrophe, as seen in the poetic texts of B.-I. Antonych, O. Stefaniovich, Y. Malaniuk, I. Kalynets, and others. Most metaphors are formed according to the model *entity* → *death*, which has mythological roots.

Related to the mythological worldview are also metaphors such as “*ark of the coffin*” (Y. Malaniuk) and “*boats of graves*” (*Gutsuls sit on boats of graves // under the rotting masts of crosses*) (I. Kalynets). According to ancient beliefs, death is a transition to another world, and to achieve this, one must overcome a water barrier. Thus, the body of the deceased was placed in a coffin, which was equated with an ark (boat): “*A white little boat of cedar, // A little boat of viburnum – // Such a boat, my dove, // Flies to the other world*” (B. Lepkyi); “*Without permission, without any carts // You stretch a canvas on the boat – and into eternity over the splashing // seas – head-on – // You will sail alone, alone // Under the soothing breeze...*” (P. Tychna); “*In the coffin, without words and complaint // Lay the well-known man. // On the planks, a pine boat // Waited for the underworld voyage*” (I. Drach). The mythological image of the boat or ship is characteristic of many ethnic traditions and is represented in various Old Slavic and Church Slavic texts.

4 Conclusion

Mythological metaphors form a foundational layer in Ukrainian poetry. The semantic archetypes that underpin these metaphors belong to transnational cultural phenomena, yet their realization in the language of Ukrainian poetry reflects the specific worldview and value orientations of Ukrainians. Mythological metaphors ensure continuity in literary tradition and, at the same time, by incorporating elements of new realities and appealing to the imagination, stimulate the formation of new meanings.

The most numerous group in Ukrainian poetry is comprised of metaphors inspired by astral myths, as well as those reflecting mythological notions of the plant and animal worlds. These metaphors are predominantly used to depict scenes of nature in landscape and intimate lyric poetry. The least numerous groups include metaphors based on myths about humans and those related to myths about the earth.

Mythological metaphors exhibit various forms of expression in poetic texts. Some are implemented in established forms as traditional figurative devices, while others represent modified or transformed versions of traditional expressions.

The study has revealed a generally high productivity of mythology-based metaphorical models in Ukrainian poetic texts. These are present primarily in the works of writers who lean towards mythopoetic and folkloric worldviews. Such metaphors

are also found in early 20th-century lyric poetry, particularly among Symbolists and Impressionists, and are present in the poetry of the “Sixtiers” (Shistdesiatnyky). Mythological metaphors are also noted in the works of Ukrainian poets with a rationalistic outlook. For some artists, mythological metaphors mainly serve an emotional-expressive function (e.g., V. Sosiura, H. Chubach, M. Lukiv), while for others, they fulfill a conceptual-modeling function (e.g., B.-I. Antonych, M. Vinhranovskyi).

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