

УДК 398.22(=512.157)

DOI 10.25587/SVFU.2022.50.90.010

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MYTHOLOGICAL EXPOSITION CODES IN THE YAKUT EPIC: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENT TIME-PERIOD OLONKHO RECORDS

Abstract. Transformation processes take place in society in many areas of people's lives and activities. In such conditions, the importance of in-depth studies of the mythological consciousness of man increases. The archaic texts of the Yakut epic olonkho have a rich symbolic nature, which appears as a fertile ground for the study of deep meanings and structures. The focus of this study is on the codes of the beginnings of multi-temporal fixations of the central epic tradition of the Yakut storytelling art. The purpose of the study is to identify the code configurations of the olonkho beginnings of the early and late periods of recordings, fixing changes in the coding categories of the contents of the beginnings. The work uses a comparative typological approach, structural-semiotic and quantitative analysis (continuous sampling method, statistical analysis), the method of hermeneutics and induction. The analysis revealed 264 units of codes from the beginning of the early olonkho record, and 112 units from the later record. In both beginnings, there is a hierarchical alignment of codes on three levels. It was found that the frequency of use of codes in the beginning of the later record is higher than in the early one. Numerical, semantic, somatic, and color codes were found to be stable in time. It is also noted the use of the hidden code of the unconscious and geo-economic code in the beginning of the later record, which are absent in the early record. In the latter, paired combinations of two codes are noted – natural-climatic, zoomorphic-color, which is not found in the beginning of the later record. In general, there is a significant reduction in the volume of the beginning of the later record compared to the early one. However, identity is verified in the implementation of the main function of the beginnings – the manifestation of “representations” of chronotopes of subsequent events of epics, where codes appear to be an important structure-forming component of myths. At the same time, the “loss” of a number of plot motifs from the beginning of the late recording is partially compensated by an increased use of code configurations. The absence of the main component of the hero myth in the beginning of the late recording of olonkho serves as an indicator of the functioning of the “micromyth”, and not a real myth built in accordance with the mythological model.

Keywords: mythology; beginning; codes; motif; time; space; hero; structure; classification grid; semiosphere.

Acknowledgements: The study was carried out as part of the NEFU research project “Epic monument of the Yakut intangible culture: textological, typological, cognitive and historical-comparative aspects”.

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Коды мифологических экспозиций якутского эпоса: сравнительный анализ разновременных записей олонхо

Аннотация. В обществе происходят процессы трансформации во многих сферах жизни и деятельности людей. В таких условиях усиливается важность глубинных изучений мифологического сознания человека. Архаические тексты якутского эпоса олонхо имеют богатую знаковую природу, которая представит благоприятной почвой для изучения глубинных смыслов и структур. В фокусе настоящего исследования – коды зачинов разновременных фиксаций центральной эпической традиции сказительского искусства якутов. Цель исследования – выявление кодовых конфигураций зачинов олонхо раннего и позднего периодов записей, фиксация изменений в категориях кодирования содержаний зачинов. В работе применяются сравнительно-типологический подход, структурно-семиотический и квантитативный анализы (метод сплошной выборки, статистического анализа), метод герменевтики и индукции. Анализ позволил выявить из зачина ранней записи олонхо 264 единицы кодов, из поздней записи – 112 единиц. В обоих зачинах наблюдается иерархическое выстраивание кодов по трем уровням. Установлено, что частота употребления кодов в зачине поздней записи выше, чем в ранней. Устойчивыми во времени выявлены числовой, семиотический, соматический, цветовой коды. Также отмечается использование скрытого кода бессознательного и геонимического кода в зачине поздней записи, отсутствующих в ранней записи. В последнем отмечаются парные сочетания двух кодов – природно-климатического, зооморфно-цветового, что не встречается в зачине поздней записи. В целом, наблюдается значительное сокращение объема зачина поздней записи в сравнении с ранней. Однако, верифицируется тождественность в реализации главной функции зачинов – манифестации «представлений» хронотопов последующих событий эпосов, где коды предстают важным структурообразующим компонентом мифов. При этом, «выпадение» ряда сюжетных мотивов из зачина поздней записи частично восполняется за счет повышения применений кодовых конфигураций. Отсутствие же в зачине поздней записи олонхо главного компонента мифа – героя, служит индикатором функционирования «микромифа», а не реального мифа, построенного в соответствии с мифологической моделью.

Ключевые слова: мифология; зачин; коды; мотив; время; пространство; герой; структура; классификационная сетка; семиосфера.

Благодарности: Исследование выполнено в рамках научно-исследовательского проекта СВФУ «Эпический памятник нематериальной культуры якутов: текстологический, типологический, когнитивный и историко-сравнительный аспекты».

Introduction

The “universal character” of cosmogony is well known for understanding the mythological worldview, which appears to be an important modeling system of symbols for the culture of the people as a whole [1, p. 230]. The theme of the opening scenes is thoroughly described in the scholarly works of a number of researchers (E. M. Meletinsky, M. Eliade, B. N. Putilov, S. Yu. Neklyudov, V. N. Toporov, etc.), in which the morphology and semantics of the opening scenes are analyzed. The “optics” of this study is “focused” on studying the method of transmitting messages, dividing and classifying the phenomena of reality. The world is structured by the ancient consciousness by recoding the perceived information using all the receptive systems. By limiting the scope of the article, without delving into the subtleties of operational techniques with binary oppositions, which at a deeper level are “splits” from the chosen code system, we are interested in the sphere of the hierarchical division of the world into levels, which uses codes as the language of description. It is important that “these divisions into codes and levels are essential in the development of mythological motifs” [1, p. 235]. The motifs are unraveled through the harmonious deployment of the original mythological core. When isolating the plot motifs of the opening scenes in the *olonkho*, we are guided by the index of motifs proposed by A. A. Dmitrieva [2, p. 198]. Our next questions is what is the dynamics of changes in

the methods of encoding information over the thirty-five-year period between the recordings of texts of one local storytelling tradition? Are the contours of traditionalism preserved or disappearing in the categories of coding messages in the formal aspect?

The materials of the study were the texts of the best examples of the Yakut epic *olonkho*: “The obstinate *Kulun Kullustuur*” (recorded in 1906), included in the “Samples of the Yakut folk literature” by E. K. Pekarsky, and “*Kyys Debiliye*” (recorded in 1941), included in the 4th volume of the series “Monuments of folklore of the peoples of Siberia and the Far East”. The main criteria for the choice of research materials are: the presentation of the best examples of epic texts of the Yakut people, belonging to one local story-telling tradition as well as the availability of academic translations. The research is based on the theoretical framework provided by E. M. Meletinsky, V. N. Toporov, S. Yu. Neklyudov, R. Bart and others; it is also based on the theoretical works of the Yakut researchers L. L. Gabysheva, L. N. Semenova, E. I. Izbekova and others. The main research method is structural and semiotic analysis. When identifying code units, their quantitative indicators and percentages, the method of continuous sampling, statistical analysis, the method of hermeneutics and induction are used in the context of the comparative typological approach.

The motifs structure in the mythological expositions

According to S. Yu. Neklyudov, the compositional organization of the epic opening scenes is formed by static descriptions of the sequential chain of representations of “time – space – the main character” [3, p. 185]. In the analyzed opening scenes of the early *olonkho* recording, the implementation of the sequence of three phases of representations in the form of the chronotope and actant settings is observed in its entirety. The exception is the indicator of the sequence, which reflects the gradual deployment in the compositional space of the chain “time – character – space”. Such a technique can be regarded as an individual innovation of the performer-storyteller. The initial part of the late recording clearly demonstrates a significant difference that expresses the going beyond the limits of “tradition”, namely the absence of an actant. The latter logically leads to the “falling out” of the compositional space of the beginning of the motifs for describing the dwelling, wealth, horse, clothing and armor, as well as the origin of the main character. Considering all the points mentioned above, the proposed analysis will proceed in accordance with the compositional structure of the opening scenes of an early *olonkho* recording.

The genesis motif codes

From the very first lines of the storyline of the Yakut epics, the idea “at the beginning of those ancient times” is implied, when nothing was created yet: *At a distant peak of ancient years, / On a distant ridge of past years, / When three Sakha were not yet born, / Three Yakuts still did not come into the world* [4, p. 286]. In the archaic consciousness, the presence of a certain boundary is emphasized, implying a message about the beginning of time, which once preceded the starting point of historical time, qualitatively separating the relationship between mythical (sacred) and historical (profane) time. These relationships are specified by the code that conveys the time message. In the early entry of *olonkho*, a numerical code in combination with an anthropomorphic code “*Sakha*” and a somatic code adjoins the time code (the past years are outlined as having a ridge). A detailed semantic analysis of the formulation of the formula by means of these codes is presented in the previous work of the author of the present article [5, pp. 304–305]. Note that in the description a phonetically motivated addition in the form of the phrase “two Yakuts” reflects a poetic technique, since it is based on alliteration. The name of the main character, the Obstinate *Kulun Kullustuur*, is also a code that conveys a message about the character, tough disposition of the main character, as well as the implication of data about the main character’s descent (*Kulun* literally means “stallion” is the son of the deity *Uordakh Dzhosogoy Toyon* [6, p. 61]). In the late recording of *olonkho*, there is a combination of the time code with the action code [7, p. 73]. The latter implies a message about a certain contradiction, behind which oppositions “action-reaction” are found. In both motifs, the time code, containing private codes, appears to be dominant, therefore, two levels of the code are fixed in the motifs.

The codes of the motif of main character's horse description in the early olonkho records

The length of the motif in the early recording of olonkho is 15 lines of poetry. Here is a fragment:

With a curlew-bird on the ears, / Cuckoo-bird on the back of the neck, / Sarich-bird on the shoulder blades, / Drake-bird on the croup, / Dove-bird on the thighs, / Gray hares on the pop-knees, / In the Upper Siberia named: The Fiery Red Horse, / Which, frolicking, shakes his head [4, p. 286].

The cosmological code dominates, structuring the vertical organization of space, which is formed by means of private codes (body, animal, somatic, color, semic codes). The composition of the animal codes is peculiar, reflecting the pairs “curlew-cuckoo”, “sarych-drake”, “pigeon-hares”, which appear as classifiers of space directions. The theme of personification of certain somatisms by birds, where the image of birds symbolizes this or that quality (for example, “curlew – sensitivity, rabbits – speed of legs, etc.”) was analyzed by E. S. Kupriyanova [8, p. 25]. In the aspect we are interested in, the loci are presented in the form of the oppositions “Upper Siberia / Middle World”, “Lower World / Middle World” and are accompanied by predicates characteristic of a heroic horse. At the same time, the semic code is noteworthy (repeating three times in the form of shaking his head, kicking his legs, wagging his tail), each time in the description confirming the characteristics of the three worlds of olonkho (for example, the type of his movement – flinching, trembling) is considered to be a distinctive feature of the Lower World. This implication of the message is reinforced by the use of the epithets “fiery, violent, vortex” reflecting the connotations with the natural elements of fire, water and air, which also form the semic code at a deeper level of the semiosphere of the motif. Therefore, in this motif, the codes are built on two levels of the classification grid of the epic space.

The codes of the motif of the main character's appearance in the early olonkho records

The length of the motif is 38 lines of poetry. Here is a fragment:

He has such fine lips and teeth, / As if lips and teeth were playing on him, / Cutting into pieces a fox-cinch, / Grown on the right side of the city of Irkutsk <...> / Smooth white hands – / Like larch, peeled from bark; <...> / He has a huge back, / As if knocked together from nine woods / A large skiff, raised upright; <...> / With high hips – in three swing fathoms, / With broad shoulders – in six swing fathoms [4, p. 287].

The text demonstrates the functioning in the motif of the anthropocosmic metaphor, represented by the parallelism of spatial directions (right, left) and paired parts of the main character's face (lips-teeth, eyebrows-eyes), which is duplicated by the parallelism of cosmic zones (vertical; horizontal) and body parts (back, as if raised stand up the boat; chest, like a wide open door). The constituent private codes of the dominant cosmological code – numerical, semic, color, metallic, somatic, zoomorphic-color, phytonymic, “work” in favor of the most complete representation of the epic space. The presence of an archaic element is observed, which is a prototype of the world tree *Aal Luuk Mas*, expressed using a phytonymic code. The topic is discussed in detail in another work of the author [9, p. 1141]. There is also a wide usage of somatisms (hips, shoulders, etc.) in the representation of a system of measures of lengths and volumes. There, the motif also fixes the functioning of two levels of codes.

The codes of the world genesis (description)

The combination of the motif for describing the world with the motif for the origin of the hero in the early recording of the olonkho seems effective. In a late entry, the presence of a motif for describing the world is recorded (according to the systematization of A. A. Dmitrieva). The total amount of the analyzed motif in the early recording makes up 47 lines of poetry, in the later version – 79. Here is a fragment of the motif in the early recording:

“I didn't fall,” he thinks, “along with the hail-rain / From the bluish sky <...> / If only I got out of the Lower World, / From the country of Yutyugyan / With a faded sad sun, / From a vast hooting abyss, / Which will not bend if you press <...> / If I were born and grew / Together with herbs and trees, / Growing on the middle mother-land, / Whose bed is the foggy sea, / In the middle – the bottomless sea, / Bottom – continental ice <...> / Sealed with lead, / Bonded by iron, / Interlayered with copper, /

Braided with silver, / Bordered with gray-black forests <...> / Then I would have in the middle of the foot / Trail of the black earth” [4, pp. 287–288].

Now we will quote an extract from the motif of the late recording:

Radiant white sky <...> / Expanding, stretching, / It turns out to be created <...> / People of three tribes <...> / Looking closely, / Four sides of it cannot see <...> / In that pristine light sky, / Where are the two-legged <...> / They became friends with the army-struggle, / Recognized with strife-discord <...> / Should breed, – / With the cool-windy western sky, / With the blessed-kind eastern sky <...> / With the rotating sea axis, / With the generous white moisture-ilge <...> / Surrounded by many stars <...> / with a full moon accompanying it, <...> / With drying up and newly arriving waters <...> / With a rotating center-axis, / with four converging sides <...> / Eight-free-eight-edged <...> / Mother Earth, shining, was created, it turns out [7, pp. 73–77].

In both versions, the dominant code is the cosmological code, which models the vertical three-part organization of space in the first version; in the second version, it is the horizontal four-part organization. Motifs include all elements of the model of the world in a three-dimensional projection, formed by combinations of many private codes (in the early entry – social, actional, numerical, color, natural-climatic, sound, olfactory, metallic, landscape, geometric, name code; in the later – the code of the unconscious (idea of creation), actional, scholarly, color, numerical, geometric, semic, geomonic, astronomical, cyclical time code). In the motif of the early olonkho notation, the lower part of the geometrical model of the world is encoded through the epithet “vast”, the qualitative content of which is revealed through the prism of a single structure of the universe [10, pp. 471–481]. The absence of a descent indicates a low social status. The semantic code is indicative, which, through the description of “action from above”, implies the vertical dimension. The name of the Lord of the *Underworld Buor Mangalai* the old man (literally translated as “The Belly of the Earth”) appears as a code that conveys “the narrator’s desire to clearly express the negative emotional characteristics of the eternal enemy – *abaasy*” [6, p. 76]. The semiosphere of the motif in the late recording of olonkho seems to be interesting. Therefore, there is a code in the form of “expansion, stretching of the object” included in the descriptive structure (comparison with the *tangalay* – the palate, part of the human mouth), directly referring to the scholarly understanding of the concept of the expanding Universe, experimentally confirmed by Hubble’s law. An explicit indication of the presence of a creator is also recorded here, referring to a precedent that actualizes the code of the unconscious. It is rather difficult to decode the astronomical code “eight-layered-eight-edged mother-earth”, which, upon detailed analysis, “splits” into components of “subcodes” – into elements of an even lower functional level, the analysis of which is presented in the previous work of the author of the article [11, pp. 247–256]. The emphasis on the idea of rotation of the world is manifested by the geomonic code, which also has a scholarly decoding (the geomagnetic field of the planet Earth), first introduced into scholarly circulation by A. S. Popova. Thus, in the motif of the early recording, there is a hierarchical division of the world into two levels, in the motif of the late recording – the division of the world into three levels.

The codes of the motif of describing the main character’s clothes and armor in the early olonkho records

The length of the motif covers 31 lines of poetry. The same technique of metaphorical recoding is used, in which space is correlated with parts of the main character’s clothing: the Upper World – with a selected sable (meaning a hat), the Middle World – with soft moose skin (coat), the Lower World – with dense leather (shoes). Of the three parts, only the sacred upper part is specially detailed – a horned cap sewn from skins from the heads of nine male elks attached to one another. As you can see, the description of the cap is extremely filled with five codes that convey information about the form, action, body part (head, which has the orientation meaning “up”), number, gender difference (male) of the constituent parts, which together recreate a single semantic field of the sacred locus epic space. In the description of the armor, namely the thundering bow of the main character, attention is drawn to the selection of qualifying somatisms – fastened with glue from the bubble, the shaft of the bow

from the humerus, the bowstring from the back sinews of the fish, which also structure the spatial organization of the cosmos. Note that a fish is an image initially endowed with a cosmic status, which occupies a central place in the cosmogonic myths of the Yakut people. The numbers seven, eight, nine, which are the cosmological postulates of the epic model of the olonkho world, are manifested in the representation of the octagonal iron arrowhead-*sardaana*, the seven-sided iron arrowhead-*tingsiriki*, the nine-sided saber *batyia*. The motif repeats the epithet “iron” four times (iron is a symbol of stiffness and strength), which develops the connotations of the “crushing power” of the main character. In the description of the “loud roaring ball-core” the body speed is encoded, where the epithet “roaring” means the sound of a flying object. Summarizing all of the points made above, it can be argued that the dominant code in the motif is the cosmological code, which is expressed with the help of private codes – somatic, numerical, color, bodily, metallic, semic, anthropomorphic, sound. The hierarchical organization of codes by two levels of mythological structuring is indicated.

The codes of the motif the main character’s homeland description

The motifs for describing the country – the focus of mother earth also have a deep semiotic representation. The motif in the early recording consists of 58 lines of poetry, in the later version it consists of 139 lines of poetry. Consider an example of an early entry motif:

This man grew up and settled / In a light blue country, / The circles of which they could not fly over / Nine free white-headed cranes / For nine whole years <...> / The edges of which they could not fly over / Eight female white cranes / Flying over it for eight years. / If we look at the left side of the country from here <...> / If we look beyond this valley <...> / If, looking back, we look east from the sea – / We will see a high coast <...> / If we look further east from it again – / They stand, soaring upward, / Three triumphant silver hills <...> / Here the breeding cattle is not transferred, / Trees, falling down, do not thin out. / Water, evaporating does not decrease, / The revered white sun rises here every day [4, pp. 289–290].

Now an example from a later version of the introduction to the epic:

When in the eight-tiered light yellow sky / Archangel-tangara <...> has not yet sat down; / When in the very middle of mother earth / the Orthodox faith did not exist at all; <...> / People of the three tribes / The true God has not yet been cognized by reason <...> / Western Siberia called / The gloriously famous country was created, it turns out <...> / At its very nape, / On the best ridge <...> / Where the crane, flying high, will stretch its neck / And, not finding it around the borders, it will screech alarmingly, <...> / Where the Siberian Crane, flying low above the ground <...> / Similar to Russian girls in sundresses / Walking crowd, low bush she has <...> / Similar stately women <...> / importantly strolling / Birch trees, she has <...> / From under the northern sky to this country / The narrow path of fetid tribes has not run yet <...> / From under the western sky <...> / Who and in what times, in what centuries, days / By this, with the evaporating, but not drying up waters <...> / Along the eight-layered-eight-edged earth / Its yellow bosom, disturbing, passed? [7, pp. 77–83].

In the reported information of both motifs, the very mode of action “fly around the circle” or “not finding a way around the borders” appears as an actional sign that translates the symbolic semantics of closing in a circle. In the motif of the later olonkho recording, the time code is reappraised. The cosmological theme is also conveyed by images of birds that are stable in this motif, the semantics of which goes back to the basic opposition “male / female”. The numerical symbolism, which explains the combination of vertical (the number nine expresses the masculine principle) and horizontal (eight – the feminine principle) structures, were also selected for a single context of the cosmological theme. In the motif of the early recording, the space modeling structure is the gradual introduction of four directions of light with successive inclusions of loci of the distant peripheral landscape according to the circular principle, forming a sacred center. The metal code “silver” indicates a positive marking of the east. The storyteller’s technique used in the description “if you look upwards”, “if you look downwards from above”, how the action code reproduces the sacred vertical structure. In the later entry of olonkho, we find a complex system of metaphorization by correlating tree species with the age,

sex and social status of people who form a social code in combination with sound, semic, numerical, phytonymic, and landscape codes. But here, as L. N. Semenova points out, there is no correlation with the directions of light – an important branch of the symbolic spectrum [12, p. 64]. However, such an omission is “compensated” by the fragments described below, “descending from all four sides of the pass-roads to the middle world”. The analysis of the epic formula “with reins behind the tribe of the sun *aiyy*, with reins behind the shoulders of a tribe of revered *aiyy*”, which has a high semiotic status, remains open [7, p. 81]. In both versions, the cyclical time code, tied to the anthropological one, in mythopoetic thinking, ascending to the unconditional opposition of positive and negative – “life / death”, appears to be an interesting aspect. Thus, we can conclude that the motif reveals the interweaving of “codes constantly interrupting each other” (R. Barthes), which are lined up along two levels of the classification grid in the early introductory part, and on three levels in the later version of the introductory part. The functioning of the third level is due to the organization of the inner essence of the epic formula “eight-leveled-eight-edged primordial earth”, as it was mentioned in the previous section of the present article.

Motifs of the codes of main character description in the early olonkho records

The abundant wealth praised in the motif is described using color, animal, bodily, actional, spatial, olfactory and object codes. The motif consists of 22 lines of poetry. In this motif, there is a clichéd usage in the description of the equestrian and cattle images (the breeding of which was a traditional occupation of the Yakut people). Researchers note that a horse, which is considered to be a pure animal, in mythopoetic worldview is associated with the sky (the Upper World) and opposed to its antagonist – a cow associated with the world of evil principles (the Lower World) [13, pp. 27–30; 12, p. 44]. Attention is drawn to the mode of action – “interweaving with the manes” of horses and “interweaving tails” of cows, who draw up the action code. The text of the code, along with the designation of the plurality of the described objects, also contains an indication of the vertical structure of space, through the use of parts of the animal bodies. Images of birds (Siberian crane, a white crane) as “speaking symbols” are also involved in modeling the horizontal and vertical structures of the epic universe. Giving a cow the scent of sweat reflects a connection with the “stinking smell of the Lower World”. Finally, re-asserting the top / bottom (sky / earth) opposition is implemented using object and animal codes.

The motif of describing the household and home yard in the early olonkho records

The motif that closes the beginning part of the epic, first of all, stands out for its length – 155 lines of poetry. From a lengthy exposition description, we will give only vivid examples of message coding:

In the very middle of the courtyard there are / Three main pillars-tethering posts <...> / The front pillar ends in a hawk, crowned with an eagle-yokshokyu, / is painted with lion's blood, / On the top of the head it has a bar-beast, / On the middle a raven post is drawn, / A cuckoo is depicted on the back post. / A huge courtyard is fenced with a “Kyokerime” hedge, / She, as if descending from the sun, runs around the courtyard <...> / In the spring, the barn talks loudly with people, / In the fall, the canopy laughs loudly with people. / It turns out that the door of his home is made of solid silver. / It cannot be opened from the evening of the full moon / Until the seventh day of the second half of the seventh month / And seven superbly strong heroes <...> / A six-row floor is made of solid wood – / So that destructive force does not come out of the Lower World <...> / Four-row walls of blown silver – / So as not scattered them with the winds from different sides <...> / In the yurt, the bench on the left side looks like <...> / The front bench <...>, the back bench <...> / On the right side of the bench, <...> / In the yurt there is an octagonal wide white table <...> / There is a story-teller, but all with sayings, hoton <...> / A stool that the story-teller speaks olonkho on <...> / Such a spacious, vast, bright dwelling, / That a man standing on his left side, / Seems the size of a swallow <...> / They say that he did not have and did not have a respectable father / With a bright face <...> / in a loud voice <...> / He did not have a venerable intercessor mother / With a white body, like a partridge <...> / With powerful silver fingers <...> / They say that he did not and did not have an old woman Simekhsin / Dirty, but arguing

in work, / Staying on the left side of the yurt <...> / No and not he had a lumberjack guy / staying on the right side of the yurt [4, pp. 291–294].

The motif contains a complex of static descriptions of small loci detailing the general picture of the main character's habitat. Accordingly, the unfolding of space in a three-dimensional projection occurs in the direction "from outside to inside". The abundance of applications of various private codes (animal, numerical, actional, color, semic, phenological, chronological, metallic, object, geometric, objective, social, somatic, sound, bodily) is raised to a single goal – the representation of an epic space. The images of the tethering posts (the tethering post is an analogue of the sacred vertical growth of the tree) simulate both vertical and horizontal spatial dimensions at the same time. Accordingly, the key oppositions "front / middle / back" correspond to "top / middle / bottom". Before us is the isomorphism of the vertical and horizontal orientations of the epic space, typical for the mythological representations of the ancient Turkic peoples. The numerical code indicates the triad nature of the vertical structure of the universe. The front pillar is supplied with the symbolism of "pure" birds and animals, and then the middle and rear pillars are represented by zoomorphic symbols of a raven and a cuckoo, personifying the semiotic characteristics of the Middle and Lower Worlds. The description uses the action code as the "running around" action. Images of outbuildings (barn, canopy) by means of semic, sound, phenological codes transmit "the traditional spring awakening not only of nature, but also the revival of the Yakut people after a long winter", as well as "the traditional autumn satiety and gaiety of the Yakut people due to the presence of food supplies". The proverb *kuhungu kiki kulbutumen* (literally "laughing autumn man") is widely known among the people. Interesting is the deep subtext of the epic formula describing the door of the dwelling, which conveys the "idea of a talisman" (L. N. Semenova) from adversity by means of numerical, semic, chronological codes. The image of the door serves as a border between the developed and undeveloped spaces, in which the semic code of "action outside" is enhanced by the use of a chronological code. Here the time period "from the evening of the full moon to the seventh day of the second half of the seventh month" contains a symbolic correlation with the Lower World. According to E. N. Romanova, it is in the seventh month according to the lunar calendar (October–November) that the earth freezes, which in the people's memory is steadily associated with the concept of "activation" of evil forces [14, p. 136]. The same protective function is conveyed by the description of the "three-row ceiling" and "six-row floor". Here, the interweaving of numerical and object codes in the form of "binding" the number six to the "floor", and the number three to the "ceiling" reflect the connection with the Upper and Lower Worlds, in which it is the Middle World that appears as a mediator between the poles. In the composition of the motif, there is a constant arrangement of objects around one theme – the actualization of spatial structures. Therefore, the description of the interior decoration of the dwelling is formed by juxtapositions of levels equipped with spatial vocabulary – the left side from the right and the back side from the front. The listed features of the objects of the interior decoration of the dwelling are based on the animistic attitudes of the ancient people.

The unfolding of the interior space of the dwelling using animal codes was studied in detail by L. L. Gabysheva [15, pp. 81–108]. A fragment of the representation of the main character's relatives, who are absent from the storyline, with the use of dominant codes – social and spatial – is also reinforced semiotically. The formed oppositions appear as role – playing – "father / mother," "lumberjack / old woman *Simekhsin*", "lumberjack / sister", going back to the attribute "male-female". However, there is an overlapping of other meanings: relations in terms of status, age, etc. as well as the hierarchy between a father and mother, a mother and daughter, an owner and farm worker, hostess and farm worker, farm worker and daughter, respectively, based on the characteristics of "native-not native", "old-young", "rich-poor", etc. Before us is a truncated version of a range of correlations of the vertical space structure (top, bottom) and three parts of the world (south, north, west) with a person of a particular age, gender, social status, reflecting a picture with socio-anthropological content [12, p. 64]. Thus, in the motif, a "peculiar orchestration" (E. M. Meletinsky) emerges along three hierarchical levels of sets of codes which complement each other.

Research statistics

Table 1 – The levels of codes implemented in the olonkho texts of different time records

	Olonkho epics	
	“The obstinate Kulun Kullustuur”	“Kyys Debiliye”
<i>Year of recording</i>	1906	1941
<i>The length of the introductory text (lines of poetry)</i>	423	232
<i>Total amount of implemented codes</i>	264	112
<i>Maximum amount of code levels in terms of the plot motifs:</i>		
• <i>The motif of the genesis time</i>	2	2
• <i>The motif of describing the main character’s horse</i>	2	–
• <i>The motif of describing the main character’s appearance</i>	–	–
• <i>The motif of genesis</i>		3
• <i>The motif of genesis and the main character’s origin</i>	2	–
• <i>The motif of describing the clothes and armor of the main character</i>	2	–
• <i>The motif of describing the main character’s homeland</i>	2	3
• <i>The motif of describing the main character’s riches</i>	1	–
• <i>The motif of describing the household and home yard</i>	3	–
<i>The amounts of various codes</i>	29	21
<i>The percentage of implementing various codes compared to the total amount of introductory parts</i>	62%	48%

It is worth noting the indicator of how frequently the codes are used: in the early recording of olonkho codes, on average, the codes are found in 1.6 lines of poetry, in the later recording – in 2 lines of poetry. However, if we take into account the traditional maximum semiotic strength of the motif for describing the main character’s household and yard in the early olonkho record (the number of code fixations, see the table below), which in the present study occupies the largest number of the initial motifs, there is an evident high frequency of the using codes in the late olonkho record.

Table 2 – Dominant and infrequent codes subdivided into the motif types

	Olonkho epics	
	“The obstinate Kulun Kullustuur”	“Kyys Debiliye”
<i>Year of recording</i>	1906	1941
<i>The length of the introductory text (lines of poetry)</i>	423	232
<i>Total amount of implemented codes</i>	264	112
<i>The genesis motif:</i>		
• <i>Dominant code, amount of reoccurrences</i>	<i>Temporal, 1</i>	<i>Temporal, 1</i>
• <i>Frequent codes</i>	4	1
<i>The motif of the main character’s horse description:</i>		
• <i>Dominant code, amount of reoccurrences</i>	<i>Cosmological, 2</i>	–
• <i>Frequent codes</i>	22	
<i>The motif of the main character description:</i>		
• <i>Dominant code, amount of reoccurrences</i>	<i>Cosmological, 2</i>	–
• <i>Frequent codes</i>	25	
<i>The motif of world genesis:</i>		
• <i>Dominant code, amount of reoccurrences</i>	<i>Cosmological, 3</i>	<i>Cosmological, 3</i>
• <i>Frequent codes</i>	22	27

<i>The motif of describing the clothes and armor of the main character:</i> • Dominant code, amount of reoccurrences • Frequent codes	<i>Cosmological, 2</i> 22	–
<i>The motif of describing the main character's homeland:</i> • Dominant code, amount of reoccurrences • Frequent codes	<i>Cosmological, 2</i> 34	<i>Cosmological, 3</i> 77
<i>The motif of describing the main character's riches:</i> • Dominant code, amount of reoccurrences • Frequent codes	– 15	–
<i>The motif of describing the household and home yard:</i> • Dominant code, amount of reoccurrences • Frequent codes	<i>Cosmological, 6</i> 102	–

In terms of frequency, the following private codes used in the beginning part, in the early record olonkho “are in the lead”: somatic (36), numerical (34), animal (26), semic (20), color (18) codes; in the later version of the introductory part of olonkho – semic (17), numerical (11), color (8), somatic (7) and fifth place are shared by actional and landscape codes (6). It is important to clarify that in fixing the numerical indicators, not only explicitly expressed numerical codes are taken into account, but also implicitly present (for example, “this person dressed/in the densest of rovduga, / in the softest of moose skin, / in the most selective of sables”, where the number 3 functions in full mode).

Conclusion

In the opening passages of the olonkho epic, a multitude of codes of myth-consciousness are recorded, creating a classification grid of its sign system. The method of continuous sampling revealed 264 units of codes from the beginning of the early recording (423 lines of poetry), 112 units of codes from the beginning of the later recording (232 lines of poetry). There are fluctuations in the alignment of code configurations of various motifs along the three hierarchical levels of the classification grid. The number of actualizations of the dominant cosmological code (in the form of the presence of vertical or horizontal structures, or both structures at the same time) in the motifs of the beginnings of the olonkho recordings of different times has been established. We found 29 units of varieties of private codes in the motifs of the early entry, and 21 units – in the motifs of the later entry, “serving” as the dominant codes. Of these, numerical, semic (code of behavior), somatic (code associated with parts of the body), color codes are stable in time. In a single application, paired combinations of natural-climatic and zoomorphic-color codes in the early record, and the code of the unconscious, geonomic codes in the late olonkho record are detected. The frequency of these motifs appearing in the recordings at different times differ significantly: in the early recording, 9 motifs function (of which 2 motifs are combined), in the late recording this figure is three times lower. With such a tendency to reduce the number of lines in the initial passage, the implementation of procedures of temporalization (representation of the time of events) and spatialization (representation of the space of events) is observed through the manifestations of the universals of “generative semantics” (A. J. Greimas, J. Courte). It has been established that the absence of a number of plot motifs in the beginning of the late recording is partially compensated for by increasing the use of code configurations. The absence of the “first person” (whose appearance is synchronized with cosmogenesis) in the beginning of the late entry of the olonkho serves as an indicator of the “micromyth” functioning in the plot (S. Yu. Neklyudov), and not a real myth built in accordance with the mythological model.

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