

Mythology of destruction: space, time, and utopia in a. Platonov's the foundation pit

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Abstract: The article examines the specifics of the model of the world in A. Platonov's novel through the prism of the cosmological idea of all-unity. It analyzes the key motifs, symbolic images and plot situations of the story "The Pit". Interest in the work of A. Platonov in literary criticism has increased significantly in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. "this century (XX century – N.A.) to the end ... is not understood." This opens up opportunities for diverse interpretations of his works.

Keywords: Model of the world, motif, archetype, mythologeme.

Introduction: The exact author's dating of the novel "The Pit" (December 1929 – April 1930) testifies to the chronological coincidence of the events of the work with the real social transformations of the late 1920s – early 1930s. This historical context forms the temporal axis and sets the spatial characteristics of the narrative. The story, structured around the archetypal motif of wandering/wandering/wandering, reveals a mythopoetic model of the world based on the unity of nature (the world) and man. This allows you to artistically comprehend the reality surrounding the characters through its spatio-temporal parameters. The architectonics of the story is built on the key opposition: "city/village", where the "city" symbolizes light, creation and the future, and the "village" symbolizes darkness and uncertainty.

From the very beginning, important telluric symbols are indicated in the work: "tree", "mountain" ("clay hillock", clay as infertile soil), "stone" as a sign of otherness, which gives them polysemy. These images, along with the river flowing into the hypothetical sea, form the integrity of the model of the world in the story.

The absurdity of the world in the story "The Pit" is manifested through the destruction of traditional symbols, such as the World Tree, which is turned into rafts for the dispossessed, coffins "for future use" and fuel for bonfires. In contrast to the destroyed wood, there are elements of the industrial world - tire iron and

harrow teeth, which are forged by Misha Medvedev in a collective farm smithy. Thus, the "golden age" is replaced by the "iron age", and the eradication of the world tree becomes a symbol of the beginning of a new era.

A myth is created about the "new man" – the human function. In this vein, Misha Medvedev, who has bestial features and is called "the devil", "a woolen idol" (p. 173), embodies the main properties of a "recreated" person: impersonality, spontaneity.

The motif of emptiness permeates the space of the story: a deserted manor with "familyless children", the house of a road inspector accustomed to emptiness, heat and immobility enhance the feeling of loneliness and homelessness of the protagonist, turning him into a "wanderer in the desert".

Emptiness becomes an important symbol that forms the picture of the world. The ancient image of the desert — the abode of chaotic, destructive forces — is reinterpreted into a large-scale "Babylonian" project that embraced both people and nature. The world is presented as an "empty place" (p. 137), "empty and anxious" (pp. 150-151), and people feel themselves "free and empty in heart" (p. 157). The ambivalent image of the desert in "The Pit" simultaneously embodies the emptiness of the characters' suffering and the meaninglessness of the world around them. The space of the desert becomes a place of deprivation and trial, and the characters find themselves in a state

of "limba" — an intermediate zone between the world and paradise, which in Platonov's story loses its sacred meaning and turns into a symbol of the loss of meaning. The absurdity of the desert space is manifested in its horizontal organization, filled with negative connotations. It is dynamically expanding, including new topoi: "city – wasteland – cemetery – tile factory – village". The desert becomes an upside-down world, in which the "common proletarian house" turns into a grave, and winter acquires infernal features:

"Midnight must have been near; the moon was high above the wattles and over the docile old village, and the dead burdocks glittered, covered with fine frozen snow..." (p. 167). The architectonics of the desert space is organized through archetypal images. For example, Voshchev chooses a "ravine in a wasteland" for a dream, which has negative semantics and is associated with the symbolism of the "grave" (p. 80). The territory of the ravine turns out to be a place of "interworld", a border between life and death. This motif is intensified in the scene with the "night mower", who symbolically personifies "death with a scythe" and the act of "re-creation of the world" – on the one hand, he mows the grass, clearing space for a pit, on the other hand, acts as a shaker of the foundations of life.

The space of the story is conflicting: the pit is deepening, and its size is planned to be increased six times. This expansion changes the narrative discourse, introducing the existential concept of eternity into the everyday plan. Traditionally, the desert is contrasted with the "garden" as a symbol of paradise. At the beginning of the 20th century, the image of the garden is associated with social utopia and the reorganization of the world. The story presents two gardens:

- The orchard of the engineer Prushevsky, designed to "conquer the desert".
- The "Cultural Garden" of the functionary Pashkin, symbolizing the image of the future. Thus, the garden and the desert in Platonov's story become symbolic spaces, reflecting the struggle between destruction and creation, chaos and attempts to overcome it.

The image of the stone, significant in various cultural and religious traditions, is also reflected in the story. It is related to biblical symbols: the tablets of the covenant given to Moses, the stable house built on rock, as in the Sermon on the Mount, and the stone of Jacob, which became the foundation of the world.

In "The Pit", the stone as the main building material acquires polysemy and is transformed into a symbol of deformation and loss of the living principle ("from wood to stone"). Most of the heroes of the story are deprived of their own home and live in a space of

emptiness: "... we all live from nothing" (p. 108).

The house in the story is presented in a dual sense: on the one hand, "the only common proletarian house" symbolizes the coming universal happiness, on the other hand, it becomes the embodiment of death. This house remains only a dream, an unattainable ideal. Its construction freezes at the stage of digging a pit, turning into a metaphor for stopped time, lost meaning and a person's break with the traditional concept of home as rooted in the past, culture and society.

After a long wandering, Voshchev finds temporary refuge in a barrack where the builders of the proletarian house live. The barrack is "a plank shed in a former vegetable garden" (p. 86), devoid of comfort and habitability. Its space is closed and static: a clock and a map of the USSR hang on the walls, dim lighting and the rare warmth of the stove create an atmosphere of abandonment, and a voice on the radio spreads empty slogans.

It is symbolic that it is here that the girl Nastya, the personification of the future generation, dies, which echoes the image of the Bethlehem baby. Her death emphasizes the doom of the people living in the barracks, and her "fallen, withered eyes" (p. 181) link her fate with the dying world tree. a space devoid of a future, where human life loses its value.

The motif of non-meeting brings Chiklin back to the ruined tile factory, where he was once kissed by a young girl. Now it is a place of dead silence: "Not a single creature, apparently, lived in this room – neither a rat, nor a worm, nothing – no noise was heard" (p. 495). Desolation, lack of life and sounds emphasize the transformation of the plant into a dead space, and the mention of rats and worms foreshadows its cemetery nature.

In a dilapidated building, Chiklin finds a dying woman. A windowless room, the neighborhood with the cemetery and the hero's subsequent action – "he blocked the door leading to the dead one with broken bricks, old stone blocks and other heavy substances" (p. 499) – turn the factory into a kind of crypt.

This motif is expanded further in the text: the pit-grave absorbs the village. The eviction of the kulaks, the death of the activist at the hands of Chiklin, the death of Nastya, the departure of Zhachev - all these are successive steps in the onset of death. Zhachev, the personification of chaos and disharmony, like a harbinger of destruction, recedes into the background, leaving behind only devastation.

Chiklin brings little Nastya, the daughter of a deceased woman, to the barracks. For the inhabitants of the barracks, the child becomes a symbol of the future,

justifying the construction of a common proletarian house. However, this future is already marked by the seal of death: Nastya sleeps in a coffin dug in a pit, and next to it are her "dead" toys that look like garbage – "bast shoes", "a tin earring from a shepherd's ear, a trouser leg made of a row" (p. 169). who "did not exist before the victorious end." In the unconsciousness of the disease, the girl demands the bone of her mother, finally blurring the line between life and death.

The ambivalence of existence is also emphasized by the remark of one of the owners of the coffins: "Everyone here lives because he has his own coffin" (p. 129). This absurd logic of life, which is possible only with a coffin, is confirmed by further events: the death of Kozlov and Safronov leads to the fact that Nastya's coffin is used for their burial. then three, then four, and the boundary between the living and the dead is finally erased.

In general, the pit, ravine, factory and inactive church become the boundaries of space, a kind of delimiters: the island is either connected to the "mainland" or cut off from it by a water barrier.

Although water plays a secondary role in the story, it closes the mythopoetic model of Plato's world, giving it an eschatological sound. Water is manifested through the image of a river ("River Valley", p. 165) and rare mentions of the sea. However, Platonov's river is not just a geographical object, but something more: "snowy, flowing" with "dark, dead water pouring among the cooled lands into its distant abyss" (p. 165). Its flow emphasizes the destruction of spatial certainty, creating a sense of timelessness and isolation: "He watched for a long time how the raft systematically floated away..." (p. 165). At the moment of the expulsion of the kulaks, the river acquires an ominous meaning, turning into an analogue of the Cocytus, the icy river of weeping from the underworld of mythology.

The end of the liquidation of the kulaks is associated with the sending of people to the sea, which opens up space, endowing it with "a sign of infinity and limitlessness in all directions" [Farino, 2004, p. 365], and at the same time a sense of timelessness and oblivion. Zhachev feels the sacredness of what is happening, realizing that sooner or later he himself will suffer the same fate: «... I felt dull and sad in my chest. After all, socialism does not need a layer of sad freaks, and it will soon also be eliminated into distant silence".

CONCLUSION

Soon the entire collective farm gathers in the smithy, where the bear works. This place and the episode itself acquire a sacred character: in ancient mythology, the cult of Hephaestus, the god of blacksmithing, was accompanied by human sacrifices. In this context, the

bear becomes a reflection of Hephaestus or Vulcan, a shaggy and lame god, and in the Christian tradition it can be associated with the image of Satan. Thus, the scene in the forge symbolizes mass sacrifices in the name of the future. Nastya becomes the last victim in the story. She is a symbol of the "element of the future", around which the utopian idea of a new world is built, but her death confirms its impracticability. A world based on the destruction of the past and the present turns out to be unable to accept even the one for whom it seemed to have been created.

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