

**Namazova L. A.**

Azerbaijan University of Languages

## ON THE QUESTION OF THE “NOVEL-MYTH” MODEL (J.D. SALINGER’S NOVEL “THE CATCHER IN THE RYE”)

*Mythology is a science that studies fantastic ideas and myths which belonged to ancient man about the world. The earth, the sky, the plant and animal world are represented by universal communities, and in this universal community all objects were understood not only as living beings, but also as beings consciously and definitely related to each other. These ideas have been generalized in mythology.*

*“The Catcher in the Rye” is a novel written in 1951 by American writer Jerome Salinger. The work very vividly tells about the acute understanding of American realities by a sixteen-year-old young man named Holden and his rejection of the general rules and morals of modern society. The novel gained great popularity, mainly among young people, and had a significant impact on the world culture of the second half of the twentieth century.*

*The work openly presents a sharp criticism of the American realities of the mid-20th century, the hypocrisy of people, unnecessary stereotypes of religion. It is also interesting that the author can perfectly express all this in the language of a 16-year-old teenager.*

*The article is about the novel “The Catcher in the Rye” and its relation to the mythology. In the novel “The Catcher in the Rye” by J.D. Salinger, many well-known archetypes are demonstrated such as “The Mentor”, “The Outcast”, and “The Initiation”. We can also come across with one of the well-known archetypes, such as “The Quest” and immediately we ask: is “The Catcher in the Rye” an example of it? Clearly, the answer is yes. The “Quest” archetype is defined as “the search for someone or something”, oftentimes an object that will “restore fertility to a wasted land”. Though Holden does not go on a search for a physical object or a person, he does go on a quest for something else: his own identity. In this case, the “wasted land” is Holden’s mind, and the restoration of fertility is the restoration of hope and positivity in his mind. Holden is in the middle of his transition between childhood and adulthood, causing confusion over who he is as he is not on either side of the line separating these two stages of life. He shows that he does want to be accepted as an adult but at the same time he does not behave as a child.*

**Key words:** Jerome David Salinger, “The Catcher in the Rye”, Holden Cauldfield, novel, myth, archetypes, genre.

**Formulation of a research problem.** Modern literary criticism requires new, more productive approaches which reveal the deep links of artistic text with mythology (use of mythological motifs, mythological hero images, archetypes). Being in the structure belonging to the modern era, the improvement of the author’s mythology and the activation of the mechanism of analysis are included in the actual problems of modern literary studies. Due to the widespread use of poetic mythology as a post-Soviet country, it is considered important to investigate the application of author’s mythology in other classical texts.

Discussion, or dispute, or even misunderstanding is inevitable when Salinger’s name or his novel “The Catcher in the Rye” is mentioned. The reader will either love him or not. There is no other middle way. When the novel was first published in 1951,

facts and events were associated with the work that would cause a lot of controversy. At first, a ban was imposed on its publication, motivated by the risky content of the book and the vulgar words used. The book suddenly began to be perceived by critics as a “literary sensation” and, as Clifton Fadimon put it, as a masterpiece containing “that a person is born out of ink, paper and imagination”. On the other hand, some distortions in the events contained in the novel have caused the work to be banned in many societies and in many countries of the world. The content of the work and many issues related to the author, whether or not, the mythological level of the work is instilled in him. The contradiction that exists in the novel “The Catcher in the Rye” is due to Salinger’s being a disorganized world in his personal life. Morril (2002) has dedicated her web page to analyzing and understanding the figure of Salinger, her ever-attracting disunity.

**The purpose of the work** is to show the motives of the “novel-myth” model and their evolution in creativity of the American writer J. Salinger on the example of the novel “The Catcher in the Rye”.

**Statement regarding the basic material of the research.** The topicality of the study can be explained by the fact that in Salinger’s novel “*The Catcher in the Rye*” there is a need for research in aesthetics and poetry, based on mythological criticism of the author’s mythology. There are enough myths in psychology. Myths arise collectively, but psychologists themselves are involved in the creation of these myths. Every myth attracts more people by being rich in arguments and facts. Naturally, all these created myths consist of archetypes having known plots. According to K.G. Jung, any archetype is, in fact, an unprecedented psychic phenomenon, and the only way out in this case is to describe all this based on his own psychic experience or to build an association based on archetypal images surrounding a person. The basis of the character of the hero is, as a rule, the search for several magical objects, places, people or knowledge. The plot line of such archetypes came from ancient and medieval literature. Usually the heroes throughout the work become saviors who save their country, people from dragons, witches, evil forces. Of course, these heroes have a certain mission in the work that they must complete, and the heroes of the work are usually characterized as clearly “negative” and “positive” images. K.Q. Yung said that archetypus is a key element to create certain mythologems. Such research will give an opportunity to highlight typological-archetypal creativity of the writer. This is a very correct approach to Salinger’s work, and when we talk about mythology, we have to approach it from three aspects.

- 1) mythological image, use of plots;
- 2) to lay the foundation of the “author’s mythology”
- 3) creation of the “novel-myth” model (drama-myth, poetry-myth)

In the “novel-myth” model, myth is not the main plot line of the novel, not the only point of view of the author. A novel-myth means that the work is in harmony with either myth or modern times. The novel “*The Catcher in the Rye*” also fully meets these requirements, and this work can be analyzed from the point of view of novel-myth.

In modern science, there are enough definitions of the “author’s myth” analysis. One of them is the approach that belongs to the Belgian philosopher Deni Jan Rujmon. According to Rujmon, the myth is a symbolic history, which in itself concentrates an infinite number of phenomena, which are to

some extent analogous. Myth is an important indicator and “password” of culture, literature. The mythological code creates a new cultural meaning and, thus, a certain invariance. “New meanings emerge from the level of a particular literary work at the text level and therefore artistic image, motive, genre, poetic mastering becomes the main research material” [2, p. 19].

If we approach Salinger’s work from this point of view, we can see that Salinger skillfully was able to use the American myth of an innocent Adam who built a city on top of a mountain. In the work, the author hints that the city of New York, filled with desires, and a pure teenager has no place in this “phony”-world full of lies [1, pp. 138–143].

The work talks about the time of the formation of the hero’s vision of the world, which continued with his attempt to find his place in life at the beginning of the work, and then, due to this, aroused interest in his inner world and the surrounding world. A teenager who is far from the world of adults, or rather from public life, sees himself not from his inner world, but from the outside as an alien person. Of course, he cannot get too far away from his inner world: he is a member of this society. It is for this reason that he is quite sensitive and distrustful of what is happening around. Since the middle of the XX century, the views of American readers and their attitude to the heroes of the works have undergone changes. In one case, if we are talking about analysis at the level of an archetype-association, then all attention should be directed to tracking the nature of the main character of the work. And in terms of time, some restrictions are imposed, and in one case a character appears inside these “frames”, a new hero fighting against society. Such types of heroes undoubtedly testify to the eternity of mythical “truths”.

Holden finds it difficult to live in a world of “cheaters” and he can’t come to terms with it. It seeks to create a “world of adults” rather than a concrete society for more people. The task is to maintain the purity of the child. The “adult society” must not be allowed to destroy the pure world of children. While walking around the city, Holden has to go through various events and trials, but the most notable is a meeting with a prostitute and an elevator, because sexual initiation is the main focus here, which is an irreplaceable factor in people’s thinking about adolescence and a mythological element. This episode from the life of an American teenage boy is attributed to the universal world and the boy’s confession to the metaphysical meaning. The work consists of two main worlds: Holden and America.

Although Holden is part of America, they don't fit together at all. He is in no way part of the system that needs to be treated for these "ailments" called insincerity, eternity and indifference. At the same time, the myth created by Salinger consists of a narrow-frame cultural and political-social content.

As can be seen from the work, the process of initiating in the novel is presented as a key element of the path leading to understanding the hero's own inner world and recognizing his own cultural views. Holden experiences a very moral jolt in the process of switching to false "I" and real "I" from real life, while people know themselves well. Thus, the introduction is one of the methods of cultural recognition, but one should not forget that it is the first generation of mass culture that seeks themselves in life.

The search by the hero of the work hints at the presence of a mythological motive masking. In the poetics of Salinger's novel, the mask acts as an intermediary between the inner world of the hero and his environment. Unpredictability, complexity, severity, and sometimes vividly manifested aggression encountered in the surrounding world, force the hero to adapt to real life, reality, which dictates the wearing of social masks. An example of this is the "clown" or "stupid" mask, behind which Holden hides as a reliable shield. Such masks are literally the only way to cope with real events beyond the control of the hero. Holden is a marginal personality that many don't understand. He is the archetypal embodiment of a Trickster who knows how to boldly hide his misfortune, helplessness. The mask, as it were, protects the inner world of the hero from opposite influences and helps to preserve his mental fortitude. It is through the mask that he communicates with the environment in his own way, and this has become almost his only opportunity for self-expression.

Salinger's mythology was a response to the demands of time on behalf of the writers of the post-war period. The novel *"The Catcher in the Rye"* reflects the mood of the 40-50s of the XX century. Most of the American population was thirsty to put aside the hard times and problems of war and post-war periods and to be provided with a quiet life. First in the United States, and then in Europe, the younger generation, dissatisfied with the "generation of their parents" who survived the war, dreamed of building a completely different future, while retaining most of their autonomy. Salinger was one of the first writers who managed to feel the "mood" of the American youth of that time. Writers of the Salinger era were writers who tried to find solutions to problems related to spirituality and the worldview of that time.

The use of myth in modeling one's own artistic world directly connects Salinger's work with twentieth-century neomythological modernist literature. It should be noted that the Salinger style was a new breath and an intellectually different approach to mythology. The influence of neomythology on Salinger's work can be clearly seen in the writer's presentation of polygenetic and heterogeneous materials as an element of his own mythology.

The socio-political events of the Salinger era emerge in his novel from its inherent mythological essence and turn into a "myth of truth". One of the main elements of the writer's mythology is his own autobiographical and literary material, which gives an autobiographical characteristic to certain events taking place in the work (like his hero Holden, Salinger does not like the elite school at all in those age periods, he, like his hero, is not perceived by schoolmates as a peer, he has a difficult relationship with his parents, who, like his hero, do not understand him, do not even try to understand him). It is these aspects: mythological, literary, philosophical, cultural, socio-political and autobiographical works of the author as a whole complement each other and put the seal of Salinger's creativity. All this distinguishes Salinger's work from modernist neo-mythological literature, in particular E. Hemingway (*"Goodbye, weapons!"*), W. Faulkner (*"Noise and Fury"*), This distinguishes him from the work of such writers as F.S. Fitzgerald (*"The Great Gatsby"*).

In his novel, Salinger combines mythological, unreal life images with modern life. Holden's peculiar journey to New York, both to the "mythological world" and to the universal world, creates the impression that a young man is in search of a free world, a free spirit and is trying to make sense of life, find himself in life, overcome all obstacles. It is no coincidence that Holden, despite being in a bar, restaurant or cafe several times, states that he is hungry and thirsty, and thus the author shows that the protagonist is, in fact, suffering from spiritual hunger, spiritual thirst, that is, "anthological hunger". The mythological images in the work took place in different places – the teacher's house, Holden's father's house, a park, a cemetery, a Pension hostel – all these places have meanings depending on the place, for example: a house is a "family nest", a dorm room is a "temporary shelter", a cemetery is a "last refuge". The mythological image of water in the work is also associated with two symbols: tea and rain. Tea is associated with birth, creation, and embodies mobility, dynamism, change, and freedom. In the novel, this mythological image symbolizes the desire to start a more perfect life

with his girlfriend, away from the boring school life, indifferent mixed New York life. Holden invites his girlfriend to stay on the banks of a rich river, enjoy the harmony of nature and feel what spiritual comfort is. Rain is also a symbol of innovation and purity. On New Year's Eve, Holden comes to New York to spend a few days there, and these days it rains, which breaks the silence of New York, causing Holden to get wet and get sick. As a result of a severe cold, his body weakens, the nervous system is disrupted, and Holden has to stay in the hospital for a whole year. The writer's use of rain and river as mythical images in his work is connected with his idea of transformation and rebirth. These two elements, which are a symbol of purification – “rain” and “river”, the writer used as a description of his hero's desire to start a new life.

Along with all the mentioned archaic symbols, Salinger brings examples from modern times, which became unique mifolegmas in Salinger's work. Among them are the symbols of New York Nights – second-class hotels, jazz music, merry-go-rounds for children.

It is important to analyze Salinger's work not only from the syntagmatic, author's mythology or the form of narration, but also from the paradigmatic aspect, which in itself concentrates ideas on creating a new world and humanity. Interestingly, there is a “binary” (duality), which at the same time determines both the structure of the author's mythology and its semantics. The invariance of Salinger's mythology consists in the writer's reflections on the thoughts and existence of people, on their relationship with each other, with nature, with himself, on people's search for the meaning of life, on the re-creation of himself or all mankind, on the struggle with death (macrocosm) and at the same time on the existence of man, his physical and spiritual existence (microcosm). Salinger has always shown a special interest in the question of “being”, and his author's mythology is characterized by a dichotomy: feeling/ reason, death/ immortality, memory /forgetfulness, loneliness/communication. These confrontations indicate that the writer considers the existence of people as two opposite beginnings.

As a story about human destiny, Salinger mythology in the work has a specific plot line. I. Galinskaya, A. Zverev, U. French and other researchers believe

that Salinger's hero's search for the truth, meaning of life, has emerged as an archetype of the “search for my own”, with the addition of other archaic mythological elements.

As is known, any archaic mythological schemes are characterized by a certain duality, and duality, which has spread to the entire text in Salinger's work, even to the thematic abstraction of the work in the language, includes the main features of mythological thinking.

The main concept of the writer can be seen in the novel's model of the concept of time-space: the world's duality with the person who seeks his place in this world, existing by his own laws, can be an example. Such an encounter is an example of a peculiar model that can correspond to the conflict between ethical views and the norms of different cultures. Consequently, it can be concluded that the writer created in his novel a mythosemiotic space based on individual and collective memory, mythology.

**Conclusion.** The mythological content of the novel, exceeding the boundaries of a deep literary framework, acquires a universal meaning. Considering the work through the eyes of a myth critic, taking into account the fact that it is an author's novel, it can be noted that the author managed to convey to the reader the development of events that took place in the United States in the forties and fifties of the XX century, through the era of pop culture, which found its place in the work. The mythological motifs and images that form the basis of the semiotic content of the novel “*The Catcher in the Rye*” created the author's idea of mythopoetic properties. The writer immerses the reader in the system of “signs” of his real world. Salinger's world, Salinger's cosmos – the apocalyptic cosmos of the transition period – consisted in an attempt to establish a new, more “qualitative” world of the old culture, its existence in the past tense, the environment in the past, old traditions. It was this singularity that made Salinger's Novel relevant for all times. The content of the work consists of philosophical ideas that are not clearly expressed, but encourage the reader to search. Despite all this, the work has a strong intra-textual emotionality and a core of meaning. A novel with the listed characteristics is a work that is understandable for each period, and not “in time”.

#### References:

1. Денисова Т.Н. Історія американської літератури XX століття. К. : Довіра, 2002, с. 138–143. [Электронный ресурс] Режим доступа. URL: [http://salinger.narod.ru/Texts/\\_Denisova-Salinger.htm](http://salinger.narod.ru/Texts/_Denisova-Salinger.htm)
2. Дербенева Л.В. Архетип и миф как архаические составляющие русской реалистической литературы XIX века. Ивано-Франковск : Факел, 2007.



3. Лотман Ю.М., Минц З.Г., Мелетинский Е.М. Литература и мифы. Мифы народов мира. Т. 2. М., 1988, с. 58–65.
4. Лотман Ю.М. Семиосфера и проблема сюжета. Внутри мыслящих миров. М., 1996, с. 206–238.
5. Dissociation And Dissociative Disorders // Access mode – URL: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/dissociation-and-dissociative-disorders> Access date: 17.03.2022
6. Dissociative disorders // Access mode – URL: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dissociative-disorders/basics/symptoms/CON-20031012> Access date: 01.04.2022
7. Fromm-Reichmann F. Loneliness. The Anatomy of Loneliness. New York: Intern. Univ. Press, 1981.
8. Namazova L. “Çovdarlıqda uçurumdan qoruyan” romanı “roman-mif” modeli kimi // ADU Elmi Xəbərlər, № 4, 2021, s. 46–53.
9. Rougemont Denis de. Love in the Western World/ Transl. by Montgomery Belgion. Princeton Univ. Press, 1956.
10. Salinger J.D. The Catcher in the Rye. M. : Progress, 1968. 248 p.
11. Selincer C. D. “Çovdarlıqda uçurumdan qoruyan”. “Qanun” Nəşriyyatı, 2011.
12. Salinger J.D. “The Catcher in the Rye” Penguin Books. Printed in England by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc, 2011.

### **Намазова Л. А. РОМАН ДЖ. Д. СЕЛІНДЖЕРА «НАД ПРІРВОЮ В ЖИТІ» ЯК МОДЕЛЬ «РОМАННОГО МІФУ»**

*Міфологія – це наука, що вивчає фантастичні уявлення та міфи, що належали древній людині про світ. Земля, небо, рослинний і тваринний світ видаються загальнолюдськими спільнотами, й у цій універсальній спільності всі предмети розумілися не лише як живі істоти, а й як істоти, свідомо й безумовно споріднені одне одному. Ці уявлення були узагальнені у міфології.*

*“Над прірвою в житті” – роман, написаний 1951 року американським письменником Джеромом Селінджером. У творі дуже яскраво розповідається про гостре розуміння американських реалій шістнадцятирічним хлопцем на ім'я Холден і неприйняття ним загальних правил і моралі сучасного суспільства. Роман набув великої популярності, переважно серед молоді, і вплинув на світову культуру другої половини XX століття.*

*У роботі у відкритій формі представлено різку критику американських реалій середини XX століття, лицемірство людей, непотрібні стереотипи релігії. Цікаво й те, що це автор досконало може висловити мовою 16-річного підлітка.*

*У статті розглядається використання міфу в романі «Над прірвою у житті» як способу моделювання Селінджера з неоміфологічною модерністською літературою XX століття, що відрізняється своїм рефлексивним, інтелектуалістським ставленням до міфу. Вплив неоміфологізму в селінджерівській поезії відчутний і проявляється в тому, що письменник звертається до полігенетичного та гетерогенного матеріалу, перетворюючи його на елементи свого міфу, на складну систему ремінісценцій та алюзій.*

*Сучасна Селінджеру суспільно-політична дійсність виявляє у його романі власну міфологічну сутність, перетворюється на «міф дійсності».*

*Актуальність теми визначається тим, що у контексті вивчення творчості Селінджера нагальною є необхідність проведення аналізу естетики та поезики «Над прірвою у житті» саме з позиції міфологічної критики як авторського міфу. Такий аналіз дозволить виявити загальні типолого-архетипічні засади творчості письменника. Ми прагнемо визначити наявність міфологічного фактора в романі системно, осмисливши його на різних рівнях: архетипно-ініціаційному (уподібнення героя) та анагогічному (створення символічного культурного коду).*

**Ключові слова:** Джером Девід Селінджер, «Над прірвою у житті», Холден Колдфілд, роман, міф, архетипи, жанр.