

Problem of perception of belles-lettres works with mythological structures by high school students

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Abstract

This article examines the perception of belles-lettres works with explicit mythological structures in Ukrainian literature by senior secondary school students. The integral perception of a belles-lettres text depends on the students' understanding of the author's mythological figurative language. The aim of the research is to define the problems of children's perception of mythological structures by classification into levels, and further to propose some ways for improving intelligibility of such texts. The experimental work involved analysis and synthesis, a study of curricula and belles-lettres, and diagnostic questioning. The research was carried out during the academic years 2017- 2018 with 208 pupils in three general education institutions. The analysis corroborates the working hypothesis about the complicated nature of knowledge about the specificity of world outlook within the frame of a certain mythological system.

Key words: perception of a belles-lettres text, mythological construction, explicit mythology, understanding, reading, working methods.

Проблема восприятия старшекласниками художественных произведений с мифологическими структурами

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Аннотация. Исследование посвящено вопросам восприятия художественных произведений с мифологической структурой эксплицитного типа на уроках украинской литературы в старших классах общеобразовательных школ. Обращение к данной проблеме вызвано тем, что целостное восприятие учащимися художественного текста в большой степени зависит от понимания или непонимания его мифологической образности. Целью исследования стала уровневая классификация текстов подобного типа и дальнейшее совершенствование путей их изучения. Использовались следующие методы: анализ учебных планов и текстов художественной литературы, анкетирование учащихся и обобщение наблюдений. Исследование проводилось в течение 2017-2018 учебного года среди учащихся (208) трех общеобразовательных учреждений. Анализ результатов эксперимента подтвердил рабочую гипотезу о том, что изучение в школе художественных текстов с мифологической структурой представляет сложность, так как требует специальных знаний о специфике этих произведений, а это, в свою очередь, диктует характер изменений в традиционной методике преподавания.

Ключевые слова: восприятие художественного текста, мифологические структуры, эксплицитный мифологизм, понимание, чтение, методика обучения.

Introduction

An important stage during work on a piece of fiction is perception of the belles-lettres text while reading it. For senior students in secondary schools, preliminary reading as a rule, takes place independently. A considerable number of the texts of the school curriculum contain mythological elements of the so-called explicit type. Their purposeful decoding helps towards “transparency,” that is intelligibility of the belles-lettres sources. Some scientists (Kovalenko & Petrynyak, 2008) prove that “to understand a belles-lettres text means to understand the author’s plan, to accept his values, motives and intentions, that is, to bring about the act of understanding its meaning” (p.19).

But the mythological structures of a belles-lettres work often complicate the process of perception of the artistic material by schoolchildren because they require knowledge of the fundamentals within a certain mythological paradigm, such as antique, religious, biblical, Slav. We acknowledge that pupils are not always able to understand the meaning of textual mythologemes or even to know mythological primary sources (legends, stories, parables, ritual actions) and accordingly are unable to recognize the role of mythological elements in the structure of a belles-lettres work, or their significance for the artistic picture of reality created by the writer. One of the most difficult problems for teachers of literature which Bondarenko (2017) called “the problem of ‘latency’ of belles-lettres works” arises because pupils as yet are not able to comprehend its artistic completeness (p.15). Its solution requires an understanding the meaning of the key elements of the text, and specifically of its mythological structures. The results of Medvedeva’s (2008) research corroborate that during the process of perception of a belles-lettres work, its interpretation takes place. In the eyes of the recipient every detail of the piece acquires a peculiar symbolic meaning, and helps understand the content of the portrayed. That is why it should be analyzed more attentively, with a greater differentiation (p.73). If a text is too difficult then the student’s ordinary reading skills and habits may fail to operate in such a way as to decode it, and understanding may be dimmed (Afflerbach, Pearson & Paris, 2011, p. 369).

This is inseparably linked with the specific issue of readers perceiving belles-lettres works. Current research reveals only some aspects of the problem. For example, van Peer & Chesnokova, (2018) are studying the literary evaluation of works and their rereading; Hakemulder. & Kuijpers, (2017) note the influence of the reader's experience on the understanding of the text. But the problem identified by the authors has not been highlighted in the last ten years within the scientific publications on the methods of teaching literature. The works of psychologists and methodologists who are teachers of literature are important here. Gukovsky (1966) Zhabitskaya (1974), and Nikiforova (1972) analyzed the perceptive literature abilities of senior pupils. As Zhabitskaya (1974) claims, literature development “reveals itself at the level of perceiving belles-lettres works and their intelligibility” (p.7). Nikiforova’s (1972, p. 6) experience in researching the process of perceiving belles-lettres texts is important. She differentiates its stages (the spontaneous emotional – the conceptual – the evaluative – the educational). This is also grounded by Gukovsky (1966) who identifies “naively-realistic perception of literature” as the “initial element of realizing which preconditions the ability of readers to understand not only images and events but also their ideological essence, their interpretation and evaluation by the author” (p. 36). In this paper, the perception of belles-lettres works is considered to be a global process unconnected to its concrete morphological filling in. However, it is also important to follow students' perceptions of works with biblical, ancient, Slavic images, plots and motifs. The influence of these elements on the process of comprehension of belles-lettres works requires the development of a special methodology for their study. The theme of the study of belles-lettres works with

a mythological component was considered by methodologists only in Russian literature. The work on biblical motifs was suggested by Cherkezova (1997) and Porol (2007) and the Belarusian methodologist M. Zhigalova (2000; 2002) proposed an analysis of works with ancient subjects, motives and images. For us, in particular, the most useful was the experience of determining the specific analysis of works with ancient content by Zhigalova (2005). However, in the methodology of teaching Ukrainian literature, we attempt, for the first time, to develop a special approach for perception and analysis of works with mythological imagery. In addition, we review the works with a mythological component not only of the biblical and ancient, but also of the Slavic and syncretic character. Considering the general principles of the methodology of studying literature as a science, this approach will be universal for the study of works with mythological structures of world literature.

Our research identified the profoundness of perception by the pupils of belles-lettres works with mythological structures, and the difficulties arising in the process of reading. The results will provide a foundation for building a methodological model of learning belles-lettres works with mythological structures of the explicit type in the senior levels of secondary schools. The aim is set out in the following assignments. To:

- 1) Identify and analyze the mythological structures in belles-lettres works of the secondary school curriculum for the 9-11th forms and determine their artistic role;
- 2) Undertake research among the pupils of the 9-11th classes to identify peculiarities of how they perceive this type of texts;
- 3) Develop methodical recommendations for creating conditions for perceiving the mythological imagery of belles-lettres works.
- 4) Develop methodological recommendations for organizing the perception of the mythological imagery of belles-lettres works, its inclusion in a holistic analysis of literary works, and establishing a connection between mythological and other artistic elements.

Methods

The theoretical component of the study was based on the analysis and synthesis of works by Ukrainian writers, comparison of methodical and psychological-pedagogical sources concerning our theme, and a study of curriculums, belles-lettres works of Ukrainian writers. The practical stage included questionnaire-based diagnostics of pupils in the 9-11th forms to reveal the levels of their perception of belles-lettres texts with mythological figures and to define their parameters. The experiment was carried out during the 2017-2018 academic year in three general educational institutions of the I-III degrees: Zhytomyr general educational school № 8; Konotop specialized school №2, Sumy region; Lubetsk general educational school, Chernihiv region. The research included 208 participants: 90 pupils in the 9th form; 56 pupils in the 10th form; and 62 pupils in the 11th form. The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was administered in the ordinary educational regime – after the pupils had studied all the curriculum-specified belles-lettres works with a mythological component.

To process the results, we defined four levels of student perception:

1. Low level: the analysis of the belles-lettres work is at the level of reproducing the plot. The pupil accepts the same mythological world perception and reality. S/he sees explicitly expressed mythological structures in the text, but only at the language level and at the level of events. S/he can also define the origin of the mythologemes but cannot explain their semantics, ideas content, the mythological basis of the work.
2. Average: the pupil identifies mythological structures in the text, points out their mythological origin (antique, biblical, Slav, or a syncretism vision of them); S/he also tries to explain their content, but the assertions are oversimplified. The student

understands the mythological basis of the work, but cannot characterize the peculiarities of its transformation by the author; they do not follow up functioning of mythological figurativeness at different structural levels of the text.

3. Sufficient: the student can explain the meaning and role of the most important mythological units on the main structural levels of the text, mostly on the image-bearing units, or those concerning the plot; more rarely the problematical and thematically, ideological. While the compositional, ideological and philosophical planes, as well as the chronotopical (time and place pattern) planes are perceived at the most superficial level. The student compares the myth proper and its interpretation by the author but they cannot give an integral assessment of the mythological component in the context of the belles-lettres work as a whole.

4. High: the student understands the content of the explicitly expressed mythological figuration, establishes its connection with different structural levels of a belles-lettres work: the plot, structure, the system of literary characters, themes, problems, time and space arrangement, ideas and philosophical content, genre and style. S/he is also able to explain the artistic role of the key mythologemes, and the importance of mythological structures for creating the artistic canvas of the reality and for the expression of the author's intention. Such a student is capable of a full perception of belles-lettres works.

Results and Discussion

The theoretical research is based on the analysis of some belles-lettres works with mythological structures of the explicit type which are specified in the school curriculum for the 9-11th forms (Table 1).

Table 1. Belles-lettres works with mythological structures of the explicit type (in correspondence with the school curriculum on Ukrainian literature for 9-11th forms)

Form	Belles-lettres work, author	Mythological constructions
9th	"Tale of Igor's Host"	The sun's eclipse, Sviatoslav's dream, Yaroslavna's lamenting, Igor's escape; ritual acts (lamenting, charming away); mythologemes of Slav origin.
	"Aeniad", I. Kotliarevsky	The antique topic on the travel of Aenianas after The fall of Troy, the pantheon of the antique gods.
	"The Caucasus", T. Shevchenko	The antique myth about Prometheus.
	"Isaya. Chapter 35.", T. Shevchenko	The biblical basis of the topic.
	"The Evil-Doers' Backs", T. Shevchenko	Biblical motives, a prayer.
	"Maria" T. Shevchenko (optional additional reading choice)	The Gospel topic about the earthly life of the Virgin.
10th	"Moises", I. Franko	The biblical topic about the prophet Moises.
	"The Shadows of the forgotten Ancestors", M. Kotsiubynsky	The legend about Aridnyk, fragments of mythical texts lamenting the deceased Ivan; description of ritual actions (getting brynza, the Holy evening, telling fortunes on the St. Yuri's day, funerals); mythologemes (chugayster, nyavka, aridnyk, molfar, witch).
	"The Earth", O. Kobyljanska	The biblical motive of fratricide, sacral-mystical connection of man with earth, mythologemes (earth, forest).
	"The Stone Cross", V. Stephanyk	The through mythologeme "cross" in the key episodes of the story.

<i>Form</i>	<i>Belles-lettres work, author</i>	<i>Mythological constructions</i>
	“The Wood-land Song”, Lesya Ukrainka	The folk lore and mythological basis of the topic; mythological л complexes: forest (Mavka, lisovyk), lake (the Dam Destroyer, Vodyanyk); vivid personification of some abstract categories (Destiny, Trouble, Poverty); detailed conceptually significant mythologemes (transformation in a willow tree and a wolf, regeneration) and individual mythologemes with symbolic meanings (eyes, house).
	“Kassandra”, Lesya Ukrainka <i>(for additional reading)</i>	The antique topic of Troy’s fall; the idea of prophesy, some through mythologemes (eyes, house, destiny).
	“The Possessed”, Lesya Ukrainka <i>(for additional reading)</i>	Biblical legends about the last days of Jesus Christ’s life (Jesus’s prayer in Hetsymania, crucifixion on Golgotha, news about his resurrection), about Maria Magdalene.
	“On the Road to a Fairy Tale”, Olexander Oles	The mythologeme of a road.
11th	“The Grieving Mother”, P. Ty-chyna <i>(for additional reading)</i>	a biblical motive of despair and grief, the mythologeme of God’s Mother.
	“Ego (Romance)”, Mykola Khvylyovy	The Mythologeme “mother”; the biblical motifs of the good and spirituality.
	“The Green Gospel”, “Christmas”, Bogdan-Igor Antonych	Pagan and Christian motives, mythologemes.
	“The Spellbound Desna”, O. Dovzhenko	Pagan and Christian elements in important episodes; the mythologeme “water”.
	“A Ballad about the Sunflower”, I. Drach	Mythologemes: sunflower, the sun.
	“Marusya Churay”, Lina Kostenko	The mythological basis of the topic (legends about Marusya Churay).
	“The House on the Mountain”, Valery Shevchuk	The biblical motive the prodigal son; parable of images and episodes; mythologemes (road, house, mountain, bird, woman).
	“The Hetsyman Orchard”, Ivan Bagriany <i>(for additional reading)</i>	Biblical legends (about the Hetsyman Orchard, about Cain and Abel, the trembling asp, Judas Iscariot; the biblical motive of betrayal.
	“Maria”, U. Samchuk <i>(for additional reading)</i>	The biblical motive of suffering and all-forgiveness the mythologeme of God’s mother.

The belles-lettres material for the questionnaire was selected by taking into consideration the functional regularities of explicit mythologism in belles-lettres works as established by Sydorenko (2018). In the curriculum of every school form there exists some belles-lettres works in which mythological figurativeness is represented:

- At separate structural levels of the text (“The Tale of Igor’s Host” (9th form); “The Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors” by M. Kotsiubinsky (10th form); “The Bewitched Desna” (11th form);
- As content basis of a belles-lettres work (“Maria” by T. Shevchenko (9th form); “Moses” by I. Franko); (10th form); “Christmas” by B-I. Antonych (11th form);
- As a parallel to what is portrayed in the text (“The Caucasus” by T. Shevchenko (9th form), “The Stone Cross” by V. Stephanyk (10th form), “Ego (Romance)” by Mykola Khvylyovy (11th form).

The complete perception of mythological structures as components of the artistic system of a belles-lettres work can be correlated with those defined by Zhabytskaya (1974,

p.12-16). He identified the fundamental layers of the integral system of a belles-lettres text (the language layer, the layer of facts, the layer of ideas) whose comprehension enables us to understand the text as a whole. In other words, mythological figurativeness is perceived by the readers on several planes: language plane (fixation of mythologemes, symbols and vocabulary of mythological origin), the plane of succession of events (singling out the motive, plot or an inserted tale of mythological content), and the idea content (deducing the idea content of mythological units and their influence on the content of the belles-lettres work as a whole). We used the experience of Gukovsky (1966), Zhabytskaya (1974) and Nikiforova (1972) to define the levels of perception by school children of belles-lettres works with mythological figures.

In the experiment it was established that when reading belles-lettres works with mythological figurativeness, the majority of pupils perceived only the outer plot without comprehending the essence of its mythological nature. The cross-sectional data enabled us to define the levels of students' perception of these works and the number of students at each level (Table 2).

Table 2. Pupils by level of perception of belles-lettres works (%)

Form (pupils)	Low level	Average level	Sufficient level	High level
9 th form (n=90)	48,9 % (44)	31,1 % (28)	20 % (18)	0
10 th form (n=56)	44,6 % (25)	34 % (19)	21,4 % (12)	0
11 th form (n=62)	41,9 % (26)	32,3 % (20)	25,8 % (16)	0
Total: (n=208)	45,7 % (95)	39,2 % (67)	22,1 % (46)	0

Typical answers at the lower level were:

- Q 1.11: "Prometheus is good. It means invincibility, and the eagle – a tsar" (Zvonok A.);
- Q 2.1 "mavka, molfar, chuhaister, the witch Khyma, lisovyk. The author introduced these creatures in order to make his story interesting and vivid" (Borolis A.);
- Q 3.2.: "Christian story of the horror trial, because Sashko's mother was afraid of him" (Zhyr D.).

Typical answers at the lower level were:

- Q 9.14: "In order to compare Prometheus's unconquerability with the people of the Caucasus" (Shvets V.);
- Q 2.11: "I. Franko inserted revolutionary content and philosophical thought into some old religious images. His Moses is an embodiment of immortal kindness" (Krachkovska Y.);
- Q 3.2: "The Christian tale of Day of Judgment is mentioned in order to demonstrate the piety of Sashko's mother who was afraid lest she should be convicted on that day". (Pylypenko V.).

Students with a sufficient level of perception of works with mythological imagery provided the following typical answers:

- Q 1.13: "In mythology Prometheus is an image of an unconquerable titan, while in Shevchenko's work he is an image of the unconquerable people of the Caucasus. In mythology the eagle tests the titan's fortitude, while in Shevchenko's poem the eagle symbolizes tsarism, hostility" (Streltsova O.);
- Q 2.3: "The Guzuls personified nature and thought that in their mountains and forests live some creatures that influence people's lives. Such an unusual interconnection was poetically described through the little Ivanko's world perception" (Ignatenko D.);

• Q 3.11: “Maria symbolizes the good, and the hero’s mother, like Maria, represents the good half of his bifurcated soul. Her image facilitates solving the problem of bifurcation of the soul, when a person has to make a choice between two important for her/him things” (Kopych A.).

None of the results from the 9-11th form students met the requirements for the high level, in accordance with our criteria, because they either had not given any answers at all or circumvented them with the help of such general phrases as: “The myth about Prometheus is of a great importance in the poem “The Caucasus” (Dmytriyevska A., Q 1.14.). “The mythological creatures help us reveal the problem of the good and the evil, of harmony and beauty in our life” (Bondar V., question 2.7); “Without the image of mother the struggle in the lyrical hero’s soul wouldn’t have aggravated” (Nazarenko P., Q 3.12).

Thus, our analysis of the experiment data established that:

1. Among the 9-11th form pupils the low level of perception of belles-lettres works with mythological structures (45.7%) prevails. Only 39.2% of those tested have the average, and only 22.1% showed a sufficient level of knowledge about the peculiarities and role of mythological figurativeness in the texts.

2. Senior forms pupils know the plot of belles-lettres works with explicit mythological structures, nevertheless, lack of knowledge about the peculiarities of the world outlook within the frame of a certain mythological system (antique, biblical, Slav) and lack of skills for their analysis complicates their perception of such works.

3. Mythological figurativeness in the language plane and in the plane of events of belles-lettres works is perceived more correctly (45.7%). It is more difficult for the pupils to induce the idea content of mythological units (22.1%). None of the pupils could explain the influence of mythological units on the content of a belles-lettres text as a whole (0%).

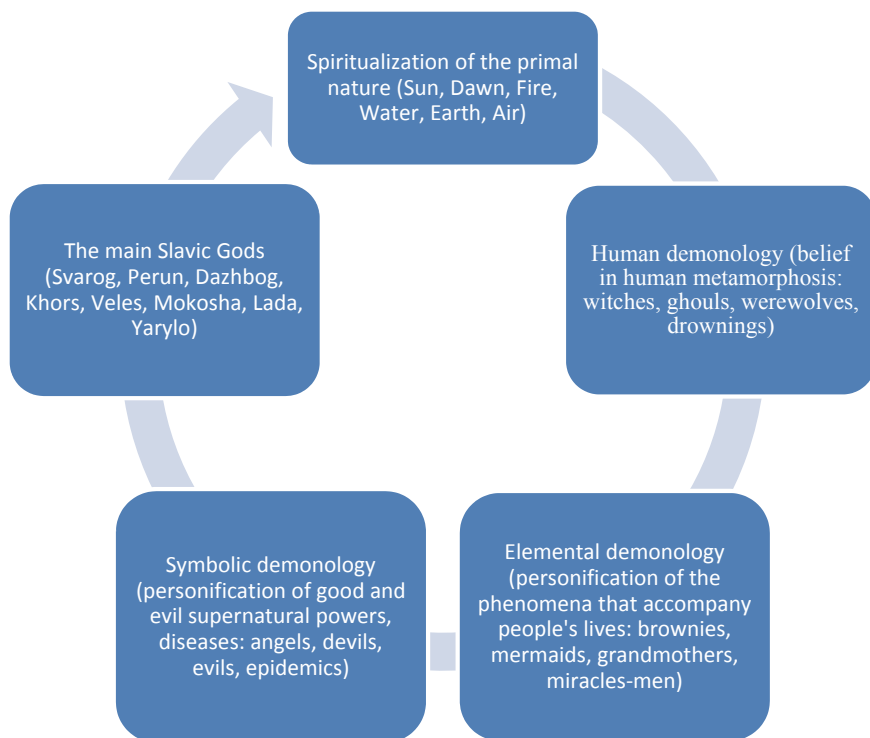
Raising the level of accessibility of the explicit morphologism enhances the significance of developing method guides for enabling a better perception of mythological figurativeness in Ukrainian literature lessons:

– it is possible to facilitate the process of perceiving mythological figurativeness with the help of a broad spectrum of methods and forms of teaching. Illustrations are also helpful, specifically of schemes concerning the universe in antique and Slav myths, and of the most well-known mythological topics. For example, at the stage of preparation for the reading of works with Slavic mythological imagery, it is appropriate to consider the scheme “Classification of images of ancient Ukrainian mythology according to metropolitan Hilarion”, which demonstrates the belief of the Slavs as a cyclic, interconnected system (Scheme 1);

– equally effective are explanations of mythological constructions (mythologemes, symbols, motives, the basis of the belles-lettres work) in the form of a short lecture by the teacher or by a scientific presentation prepared by more advanced pupils. For instance, knowledge about worship of the forces of nature and belief in metamorphoses in Slav mythology before reading “The Tale of Igor’s Host”, the earlier ballads by T. Shevchenko (“The Bewitched Woman”, “The Poplar”, “The Lily”);

– but if the mythological material is already known to senior pupils (specifically, the antique myths from the course of foreign literature), the teacher can stimulate their knowledge through debate. For instance, to work out the myth about the antique titan Prometheus before the analysis of the introduction to T. Shevchenko’s poem “The Caucasus”, or the biblical legend about the prophet Moses – before the analysis of the poem “Moses” by I. Franko;

Scheme 1. The system of images of ancient Ukrainian mythology according to the works by metropolitan Hilarion



– assignments to facilitate understanding of the given mythological paradigm (“Just recall the biblical tale about Moses”; “Name the antique gods who lived on Olympus. What do you know about them?”; “What ancient rituals of the Ukrainian people which were observed during the Ivan Kupala festivities do you happens to know?”) will aim preparations for perceiving new material. But the need for using them will remain at all stages of working out a belles-lettres work. Specifically, for generalization and systematization of the material learned will become productive and creative some assignments for forming conclusions on the peculiarities of the author’s use of universal mythological structures: significance of a well-known myth for comprehension of the general conception of a belles-lettres work, creation of a multimedia presentation about some myths in a concrete text or in all literary activity of a writer (for instance: “Multifariousness of the Bible in the belles-lettres works by T. Shevchenko”, “The antique mythology in Lesya Ukrainka’s drama works”).

Conclusions

The aim is for the teacher is to make mythological figurativeness accessible for perception and analysis. To achieve this, it is necessary for the students to explore the mythological basis of the work. This plays a preparatory role for the pupils to better comprehend a belles-lettres source and secures transparency of the text. Such work presupposes:

1. Research on the structure of the mythological basis to:
 - Define the peculiarities of unfolding the plot;
 - Make an assessment of the peculiarities of internal qualities and behavior of the literary characters;
 - Single out semantically marked language units;
 - Establish the problem and theme orientation;
 - Outline the genre parameters of a myth (or a legend, or a parable).
2. Explanation of the primordial meanings and world-outlook content of the mythological basis, to reveal the meaning of mythologemes, symbols, motives, themes, and figures of speech.

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Appendix 1.

Questions 1. Questionnaire for pupils of the 9th form

1. What names of mythological origin (names, symbols) are present in the “Tale of Igor’s Host”? What do they denote?
2. In what way is nature portrayed in the “Tale of Igor’s Host”? In what way does the author mythologize it? Does it affect the events pattern of the work?
3. Why does the sun eclipse attract the author’s attention before the campaign?
4. What is the symbolical meaning of Sviatoslav’s dream? What is its role in the text?
5. What nature’s powers does Yaroslavna address? Why?
6. What pagan beliefs and rituals are described in the “Tale of Igor’s Host”?
7. What is the connection between the use of symbols in the text and the style of the “Tale of Igor’s Host”?
8. What biblical legends became the basis for T. Shevchenko’s “Maria”?
9. Explain the peculiarities of T. Shevchenko’s creative re-interpretation of the Biblical tale about Jesus Christ’s mother Maria?
10. What antique myth did T. Shevchenko use in his introduction to the poem “Caucasus”?
11. What do the images of Prometheus and the eagle symbolize in the antique mythology and in T. Shevchenko’s poem “Caucasus”?
12. What significance in the context of “Caucasus” does the inserted tale about the antique titan have?

Questions 2. Questionnaire for the pupils of the 10th form

1. What mythological creatures or images of people with supernatural abilities are there in the story by M. Kotsiubinsky “The Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors”? Why does the author make them self- dependent characters?
2. Explain 1-2 episodes of “The Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors” where some mythological creatures act (for example, the shcheznyk pastures goats, aridnyk creates mountains, Ivan dances with chuhaister, pursues mavka).
3. How is the interconnection between the Guzuls and nature depicted in the story “The Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors” by M. Kotsiubinsky?
4. What rituals and customs of the Guzuls are described in the same story by M. Kotsiubinsky?
5. What folk-lore and mythological images, motives were used by Lesya Ukrainka in her fairy-drama “The Forest Song”?
6. Explain 2-3 traditional mythological images and their creative interpretation by the poetess in her “The Forest Song”?
7. What is the significance of the mythological characters for revealing the main idea and the problem of the fairy-drama?
8. What are the peculiarities of the time and space pattern of the work? Do mythological elements influence its unfolding?

9. Substantiate the genre specificity of a fairy-drama basing on the example of “The Forest Song” by Lesya Ukrainka.
10. What biblical material became the basis for the poem “Moises” by I. Franko?
11. How did I. Franko change the biblical plot? Why?
12. What leading motive and idea did I. Franko enclose in the world-wide known biblical plot and image of the prophet Moises?
13. What Christian symbols are used by V. Stephanyk in his short story “The Stone Cross”? Explain their meaning.
14. What episodes of the short novel clarify the meaning of its main mythologeme – the mythologeme of a “cross”?

Questions 3. Questionnaire for the 11th form pupils

1. Name the most important symbols and mythologemes in the cinema story “The Bewitched Desna” by O. Dovzhenko (for example, the Desna, hut). What is their role in the text?
2. What Christian tales have been mentioned in this work? Interpret their meaning in the context of the cinema story?
3. What folk tokens, beliefs and customs were described in the story? Do they have any influence on the lives of the characters in the story?
4. In what aspect are time and space presented in the cinema story by O. Dovzhenko?
5. In what way do the pagan and Christian world outlooks join in the reality depicted by the author?
6. Disclose the content of the poem “Christmas” by Bogdan-Igor Antonych.
7. What key symbols are used in the poem? Explain their meaning.
8. What kind of world outlook do the mythological elements disclose in the poem “The Christmas” by Bogdan-Igor Antonych?
9. With what biblical character is “mother” associated in the mind of the romantic personage of the short story by Mykola Khvylioviy “Ego (Romance)”? Why?
10. In what fragments of the text “Ego (Romance)” does the author draw a parallel between the mother of the lyrical personage and the biblical Maria? What part of the bifurcated “Ego” of the lyrical character does Maria symbolize?
11. What is the role of mother in the internal struggle of the lyrical personage between humanism and duty, between the good and evil?
12. In what way does the image of mother help reveal the main problem of the short story by Mykola Khvylioviy? Why?