

## FUNCTIONS OF MYTHOLOGEMES IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE NOVEL “THE LAST OF MOHICANS” BY J.F.COOPER

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### **Abstract**

In this article functions of mythologemes in the structure of the novel “The Last of the Mohicans ...” by J.F. Cooper are described. Mythopoetics of the novel “The Last of the Mohicans ...” has a systemic character, that declares the author’s deliberate strategy ideologically conceptualizes the spiritual culture of the Indians of North America, in particular the Delawares and the Hurons, to interpret it in the light of the political and military struggle of England and France in the XVIII century, to differentiate tribes of the Natives on the principle of “their own and others”. Mythopoetics of a novel and its significant markers function fully in the light of this most important task. However, we should be thankful for the great writer that he preserved the Indian myths for future generations, demonstrated impressively their psychology and culture, beliefs, magic military, customs and rituals. Analysis of the novel reveals the central (universal) cults of the Indians; dating back to the days of the Toltecs, Mayans and Aztecs, as well as local totemic cults, functionally compare them with the purpose of deeper probing for the reconstruction of spiritual cosmos of Aborigines - the peoples of the North America. Modern studies show that in this plan the material of J. F. Cooper’s works have important meanings.

**Keywords:** myth, paradigm, totemic cult, heraldry, marker, function, concept.

### **Introduction**

J.F. Cooper’s novel “The Last of the Mohicans ...” is one of the most iconic works of the American writer which has a huge impact on the aesthetic consciousness of young generations in many countries during several centuries (J.F. Kuper, 1983) The popularity of this work is connected with an exceptional romantic charming image of the noble Indian warrior, ranger, leader named Chingachkuk. In the historical perspective the theme of indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica is global, tragic, and multifaceted, it goes to the limits not only in the Pentalogy of J.F.Cooper, but in the whole world of the literature. Through its long context it permeates the growing awareness of the complexity of humanity and deep conditioning of the fracture of the Aboriginal civilization of Mesoamerica, which began with the invasion of the Spanish conquistadors in the 15th century.

J.F. Cooper is one of the first American writers who like J. London, M. Reid, Washington Irving, began rethinking theme of Indian tribes, rising to the position of sympathy for the native people. This is especially noticeable in his novel “The Last of the Mohicans ...” and “Pathfinder” (J.F.Kuper, 1988) However, these writers had laid the foundation for a romantic Westernization and the schematization of this topic. Rather superficial attitude of readers to the Indian theme, expressed in the spontaneous sympathy for the native tribes, rampant enthusiasm for this problem that as a result has attracted inevitable Westernization in the twentieth century gave way to a more profound study of the whole range of issues of Indian culture and its civilization. In the second half of the twentieth century it was actualized the issue of Indian-Turkic linguistic and mythological parallels (A.Karimullin, 2004). This question is a reflection of the complex theory of the origin of a man on the territory of Mesoamerica by phased migration from Siberia and Asia through the Bering land bridge, as well as by sea.

From the ideological point of view, the novel by J.F. Cooper looks like an excuse to the Anglo-Saxon expansion in North America. The typical westernization of the Indian theme threads holding the line between the native tribes on the principle of loyal – their own and unloyal – not there is due to this position. Showing events of the eighteenth century, when there was a war for the territory of American continent between England and France, peculiarities of the writer’s understanding of the Indian perspective are linked entirely to the strategy of the author to form the exculpatory basis for the British expansion.

From the perspective of today, this author’s position seems tendentious. “American literature is rich in novels, stories about the Indians of America, including about the Sioux and in which they are displayed as a militant, exotic and quarrelsome aborigines in terms of white colonizers. Such unilateral sin is showed in the works of writers such as J.F. Cooper, M. Reid, and others. There is a rich literature in English about the Indians of North America, which is devoted to the description of the wars with Indian tribes, as well as a description of their life, customs, anthropological features, their history from the time of colonization of America, which shows the superiority of the white man”- writes about this A.Karimullin (A.Karimullin, 2004).

There is no doubt that the French writer would show as kind, clever and good those tribes who fought on the side of France, that were the same Iroquois, Huron, Mohawks, while Mohicans and Delaware would look sinister and unkind in his works. In this regard, it is logical to note that at all times the colonizers of all kinds sought to split the environment of indigenous people, to sow discord, and then ignite the war. The researcher John Menchup White writes: “In the more northern areas during the war with the Pequot people in 1637 colonists resorted to the tactic of using one Indian tribe against another. With the help of the Mohicans and Narragansets colonists destroyed most of the Pequot people and other survivors were deported as slaves to Bermuda. Pequot people were the first of more than 400 tribes, have ceased to exist over the next 250 years” (D.M.White, 2007) In the light of this conclusion a reader should understand why the Mohicans are shown in the novel by J.F. Cooper as kind and good Indians. We must pay attention to the fact that the image of Chingachkuk was significantly saint and Uncas, his son, was shown as the last of the Mohicans. This tendency, of course, clearly characterized the author’s position.

The problem of the position of the Indian tribes was intensified during the war between the young American State and Britain. John Menchup White clearly shown the stiffness of actions of the American colonists who went to the most decisive actions in relation to the hostile Indian tribes and wrote in his work: “In the end, in the League of the five Iroquois tribes there were problems on the question of whom to support: English or American colonists rose in

revolt. Those who sided with the British, began to do such atrocities that frightened even the English themselves, and George Washington, at the most critical moment of the War of Independence, was forced to send a formidable army under the command of General George Sullivan in the center of concentration of the Iroquois settlements. Sullivan burned down 40 settlements, and the influence of the Iroquois came to an end once and for all” (D.M.White, 2007).

### Methodology

Anthropological aspect of Native American themes in novels of J. F. Cooper is shaded, because the writer was not interested in diving into space of culture of the natives, in this regard we can mention Henry Longfellow’s poem “The Song of Gayyavate” (G. Longfellow, 1976). Novels by J.F. Cooper pursued another important task, adventure romantic spirit of the work suggested that in the genre-cognitive terms these works appealed to consciousness of a layman and the younger generation, interested in westerns about the Indians.

In mythological terms of J .F. Cooper’s novel “The Last of the Mohicans ...” are contrasted images of Indians Chingachkuk and Magua. Antithesis of Chingachkuk and Magua as characters were systemic, it is stemmed from the author’s politicized tendency to present loyal Indians as good and disloyal – unkind and evil. Chingachkuk of the Mohican, where, as it turned out in the novel, from the old times are elected leaders for the entire Delaware confederacy of tribes, he was a good Indian. Magus, as a represented of Mohawk, Tuscarora, was a negative character; he was portrayed by ominous colors in the text: *«На суровом лице туземца военная краска расплылась, и от этого его темные черты невольно выглядели еще более дико и отталкивающе, чем в искусных узорах, наведенных для устрашения врагов. Лишь глаза его, сверкавшие, словно яркие звезды между туч, горели дикой злобой»* (J.F.Kuper, 1983).

In the same expressive vein, it is shown the portrait of Chingachkuk: *«Краснокожий сидел на краю шиштого бревна и спокойными, но выразительными движениями рук подчеркивал свои слова. Его почти обнаженное тело являлось ужасной эмблемой смерти: оно было расписано черными и белыми красками, что придавало человеку вид скелета. На бритой голове индейца была только одна прядь волос, украшением служило лишь орлиное перо, спускавшееся на левое плечо. Из-за пояса виднелись томагавк и скальпировальный нож английского производства. На мускулистом колене небрежно лежало короткое солдатское ружье, одно из тех, какими англичане вооружали своих краснокожих союзников»* (J.F.Kuper, 1983).

We define the following details in Chingachkuk’s portrait:

hair, talking about tribal affiliation,  
eagle feather, hinting at the status of the leader,  
war paint of a body as a skeleton.

In this symbolic number the most significant are the signs: *eagle feather* and *war paint*. About The heraldic value of the eagle’s feather the Indians had written the following: “Comanche, for example, believed that the bear helps in the treatment of wounds, the wolf warns people about the danger, the deer causes and cures diseases, coyote predicts happiness, ferret is considered a strong spirit of helpers, and the eagle - the patron saint of soldiers (D.M.White, 2007). Representation of the eagle as the patron saint of soldiers was generally widespread in the steppes. It is necessary to mention that in the image of the eagle seemed a mythical thunder-bird for Indians, considered the patroness of the warriors and the mistress of thunder, lightning and rain. About Dakota C. Wissler wrote, for example, that the thunder-bird is considered an important deity of war and identified with an eagle by Dakota” (U.P.Averkiva,

1970, 145-156).

The outstanding anthropologist Mircea Eliade also drew attention to the importance of an eagle feather in the external trappings of the northern Indians: “Pay attention to the value of an eagle feather in the North American shamanic healing: this symbol of the magic flight, most likely associated with the ecstatic experience of a shaman” (M.Eliade, 2015, 552).

Thus, the eagle feather indicates a sacred and mystical connection of Chingachkuk with “upper”, i.e. with the sky, at the same time, war paint as a skeleton ambivalently represents the death, and functionally it should waft enemies’ invincible fear. The symbol of the skeleton clearly alludes to connection of Chingachkuk with a chthonic lower world. In this regard it requires decoding the Chingachkuk’s name, which in Delaware dialect means “The Great Serpent” (J.F.Kuper, 1983).

As it turns out in the context of the work, it is a great word in the heraldry of all Indian nations and tribes of North and Central America, has a substantial military semantics: “... his name does not mean that he is indeed a snake, no, his name tells that he was aware of all twists, all corners of human nature, that he is silent and is able to put his enemies strikes in those moments when they do not expect” (J.F.Kuper, 1983).

The image of the Serpent in world mythology is a global symbol. Serpent – a lord of the underworld, it dwells at the bottom, under the ground. In this aspect, it was worshiped many nations of Asia, for example, protoTurkssuch as Bapu Khan, Mesopotamian people as Apatu-Napatu, the ancient Egyptians as Apope, as Sesa by ancient Indo-Aryans, as Ureyu by ancient Greeks and the people of the German group, etc. (Mify narodov mira. Entsiklopedia. Gl.redaktor S.A.Tokarev, 2008).

In the mythology of the nations of the North and Central America, The Serpent appears as a zoomorphic chthonic and celestial being, that is, “The winged Serpent”. In the encyclopedia “Myths of the World” the image of a winged serpent is defined: “For example, a “flying”, “winged” or “feathered” Serpent-dragon (Quetzalcoatl among the Indians of Central America) that combines features of a snake and bird; for a number of Japanese and Indian traditions is a typical image of a horned snake. In archaic cosmogonic myths of Eurasia and America “Serpent” carries disconnection and connection of Heaven and Earth. According to mythology of Indians of Eastern Bolivia, they say that once the sky fell to the ground, but the serpent, entwined around them, separated them again and continues to keep them detached. A similar motif in Aztec mythology is connected to Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca, who turned into two snakes in order to break into two parts a gluttonous earth monster (Ancient Mexican analogue of the Mesopotamian Tiamat), that swims in the original Ocean. From one part of the monster, they made the earth, from the other - the sky. Quetzalcoatl sailed on the water on a raft, made of snakes” (Mify narodov mira. Entsiklopedia. Gl.redaktor S.A.Tokarev, 2008).

Thus – The Serpent in Indian mythology is a complex, ambivalent image, which attributes combines archetypal signs of heaven and earth. The Serpent, tearing one chthonic creature of primordial waters, bears the features of the creator of the universe. “The winged serpent” is a god, the mediator between the worlds, top and bottom, initiating soldiers as bearers of death and its messengers. The sign “Serpent” could wear only a warrior from a special, dedicated to the master caste or clan, claiming authority over tribal alliances. “The winged serpent” in Toltec and Aztec (Quetzalcoatl), and Maya mythology (Tepe and Gucumatz) is the main and cathedral mythologeme. “Tepe” and “Gucumatz” are “Conqueror, Mighty” and “Snake, covered with green feathers”. A couple of deities, who led the pantheon of Quiche. The name “Snake, covered with green feathers, leads to the deity Quetzalcoatl of Toltec, whose name has the same value” - that defines the attributes of Maya deities R.V.Kinzhlova (Svaychennye pis'mena Maya, 2007, 397).

For all these reasons, we can assume that Chingachkuk as his son - Uncas, the last of the Mohicans, are marked by special signs, he seemed a secret envoy of archaic times, when the cult of the Great Serpent sanctified power of the ancient imperial nations - Toltec, Aztec, Maya. Knowledge about the Great Serpent, its holy and sacred paraphernalia are sacroiliac to Chingachkuk indirectly and his ancient clan of Mohicans. His great mission is to remind scattered Indian tribes about the Great Serpent, to unite them under a magic symbol of sacred antiquity. This is the main function of mythologeme Great Serpent in motion of meanings of the novel by J.F. Cooper. This feature is especially clearly manifested in the climax of the plot and its denouement, when Uncas shows shocked Delaware his true face of the carrier of a sacred emblem - image of a turtle, that is, the great leader of all Delaware Union.

Mythopoeics of the novel "The Last of the Mohicans ..." is structurally organized complicated and bears the signs of a particularly well thought-out strategy of the author. One of these features is the duality of mythologemes. So mythologeme "The Great Serpent" is opposed to the mythologeme "The Cunning Fox". Magua, hidden by the name The Cunning Fox, is one of the leaders of the Hurons. Decoding of totemic symbols of Indian peoples shows that the fox is also present in a number of totemic peoples of North America, but its religious significance is local, in other words the fox in the pantheon cannot compete with such universal images as the Great Serpent and the Great Eagle, especially with their single hypostasis – The Winged Serpent. In comments to the mythological image of the Fox are defined the following qualities - the Trickster, that is arrant rogue and a trickster. (Mify narodov mira. Entsiklopedia. Gl.redaktor S.A.Tokarev, 2008). Indians of the North America are often also perceived image The Sly Fox, often strikes around the finger of another trickster - Coyote or Raven - stratifiers. Precisely because of its qualities - scorched tricks, wickedness, lycanthropy, sophisticated mimicry Fox is attracted to the Indians by involving it in the arena of the magical military actions. Magua acts in this role – The Sly Fox, is not just successfully plant in delusion The Great Serpent - Chingachkuk. This is evidenced by the following part: "The Sly Fox has proved that he is worthy of honorable nickname given to him by Canadian fathers - began Hayward. - I see all of his wisdom, understand how much he has done for us, and do not forget that in the hour of gratitude. Yes, The Fox is not only a great leader - he is able to deceive their enemies" (J.F.Kuper, 1983)

In this text, it is significant for us that in the guise of The Sly Fox is hiding one of the great leaders of the Hurons. Hence, the antithesis of Magua and Chingachkuk (The Sly Fox and The Great Serpent) for the form of personal personifications masks larger-scale conflict - a struggle between two forces in the eternal pantheon of Indians, political confrontation of tribal alliances, involved in the war of France and England. Magua and Chingachkuk (The Fox and The Snake) are opposed to the emblems and as signed bestialities, taking their places in shamanism and totemism the North American Indians. In this regard, the image of the Great Serpent is colossal, universal, genetically rooted in the form of markers of imperial ideology of the Maya and Aztecs, the image of the Fox in the mythological space is local, and semantically it appears mainly in heraldry of military clans of several tribes. Apparently, there is no accident. In the structure of the novel the sense of confrontation between the two totemic figures is revealed in the climax, where the "removal of masks" takes place during the meeting of one of the great Delaware tribes.

Plan of social and political events in the novel pulled to the node climax in a special way. All development of actions in the plot came down to the fact that the union of Delaware tribes, where was the Mohicans as a leading clan, and from which were chosen the great leader, has steadily drawn into a larger alliance with the Hurons, tending to cooperate with the French colonial troops. Tactics of the Sly Fox as one of the leaders of the Huron is to stop actions

Chingachkuk and Uncas in their attempts to stop this rapprochement. Magua is almost possible to achieve this goal, in his speech at a meeting of the chiefs and warriors of Delaware he makes a great impression. Moreover, the cunning Huron with his colorful speech appeals to the general racial consciousness of the Indians, recalling the general insult of the Indians because of the onslaught of the white man. *«Своим языком белый человек затыкает уши индейцам; сердце бледнолицего учит его нанимать за плату воинов, чтобы они сражались за белых людей; хитрость помогает ему собирать блага земли, а руки его захватывают всю землю от берегов соленой воды до островов Большого озера. Великий Дух дал ему достаточно, а он хочет иметь все. Таковы бледнолицы»* - says Magua [J.F.Kuper, 1983]. At the same time the personal goal of the Warrior-Fox is to persuade the Delawares give him the prisoners - Hayward and scout.

Consequently, the personal motif – revenge to Chingachkuk and Pathfinder, hatred of generic enemies - Mohicans, the desire to get a white woman, hidden prevails in the actions of Magua. This personal goal of Magua is still weightier than the total Indian challenge of fighting with the colonial expansion. Consequently, Magua – is a demagogue, he knowingly and cunningly uses trust of Delaware and Huron leaders. Demagogue is always a potential provocateur. Next we see that Magua manages to push the Delawares and the Hurons in the fratricidal struggle. Consequently, the intrinsic nature of Magua fully justifies his heraldic name “The Cunning Fox”. That is, according to the author, the intrinsic nature of Magua - Sly Fox. The author’s concept is that the reader’s sympathy and logical victory are given to Chingachkuk – The Great Serpent. Thus the author removed from the traditional for the Christian paradigm of the serpent struggling motif, which presents everywhere in Western culture in almost all its genres (Asemkulov T., Nauryzbaeva Z., 2006, 66-71).

We are still significant that The Sly Fox appeals not only to the history of the Indian race, to the topic of a common enemy, but also refers to the Great Spirit, with reason, relying on the fact that the name of the Great Spirit will impress the leaders of Delaware. In our research we should reveal the name of the Great Spirit, revered by all the tribes of North America.

## Results

The image of the Great Spirit fills context of Fenimore Cooper’s novel semantically, makes it ideologically completed, and enriches the function of paradigmatic motives. There is no doubt that the writer puts metaplan of the Indian mythology and ontology into context of the work on purpose. According to the historical research, we know that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the culture of the North American Indians due to the peak of anti-colonial struggle of aborigines there was a movement of the leaders-prophets, that purpose was to establish a unified religion for tribes under the auspices of the Great Spirit. “In the early 60s of XVIII century, an Indian from the tribe of the Delaware turned up in Michigan, who became known as the Delaware prophet. He talked about his vision to, in which Indians could gain their freedom and independence, if they unite, will treat each other as brothers, give up alcohol, firearms, and worship only the Great Spirit. Teachings of the Delaware Prophet quickly were spread to central and north-eastern regions of the continent; it inspired Algonquian tribes to a major uprising against the British, which was led by the famous leader of Ottawa Pontiac” - wrote John Manchin White (D.M.White, 2007).

In this context it is necessary to comment on the status of a deity named Manitou, to which Magua appeals in his speech. The encyclopedia defined it as “Manitou (in the language of the Indians-Algonquin of North America – “the spirit, God”) – a designation of a mysterious magical power, and personal spirits and protectors. According to legends and customs of the North American Indians, every man - a warrior and a hunter – had to acquire Manitou by

special tests and “visions”. The Christian missionaries tried on their own understanding of Manitou to develop belief among the Indians in Heavenly God (“The Great Manitou”), which was reflected in the poem of G. Longfellow’s “Song of Hiawatha” (Bo’lshaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya, 1978).

Despite the attempts of the leaders-prophet of Algonquin to give the Great Spirit - Manitou a status of the monotheistic God, we should note that they did not succeed. Although, in the twentieth century, aboriginal reservations of the USA were still attached to a single peyote cult (D.M.White, 2007) and Indians of North America have no idea about the united God, there is no single cult, there is no tradition of a single Scripture. The reason for this lies in the archaic and highly localized character of the cult of the Great Spirit of Manitou. Most likely, first Manitou was a deity of one or some hunting tribes, living along the shores of the Great Lakes, but after, in the era of colonial wars, the semantic and ideological expansion of this image were occurred.

In this context the reason for the popularity of the epic by Carlos Castaneda “Don Juan” has become clear; it is explained by an attempt to create a universal spiritual teaching not only for the Indians of Mesoamerica, but for everyone on earth, who is intermingled to pantheism, animism and shamanism. It is noteworthy that through Carlos Castaneda the Toltec magicians reported about The Spirit of the World - the Great Eagle, the creator of all universes (Kastaneda K., 1995, 248-467). However, we shouldn’t forget that the Great Serpent - Quetzalcoatl, who is also Tepe and Gucumatz, also Kukulcan is represented as the feathered and winged being. This hypostasis has features of universalism, which is clear to all Indians, who are bearers of intimate knowledge of ancient Toltec.

At the meeting of the Delaware, Uncas, son of Chingachkuk, who seems to be a humble warrior, scout, comes to the fore, showing shocked Indians a turtle tattoo - a great sign, the message of the times, and the voice of antiquity. In the novel, it is shown like this: *«Глаза делавара, казалось, выкатились из орбит, рот открылся, и вся фигура словно окаменела от изумления. Медленным движением он поднял руку и показал пальцем на грудь пленника. Товарищи его столпились вокруг, и все взгляды с удивлением устремились на прекрасное, татуированное голубой краской изображение маленькой черепахи на груди пленника»* (J.F.Kuper, 1983).

The reaction of a century patriarch - the leader of the Delaware - was also significant. He was shocked to the depth of his spirit: *«– Последний час Таменунда близок! – воскликнул мудрец.– День наконец близится к ночи! Благодарю Маниту за то, что здесь есть тот, кто заменит меня у костра совета! Ункас, внук Ункаса, наконец найден! Дайте глазам умирающего орла взглянуть на восходящее солнце»* [J.F.Kuper, 1983]. In fact, the great surprise along with the trans of the Leader and of the Delaware is just a mental factor which is explained as followed: Uncas – it isn’t just a name, but a kind of a marker of a heir to the great leader of the Delaware. Uncas was always chosen from the ancient clan of Unamis - Turtle. As it is shown in the novel, with decrepitude of a patriarch this clan is disappearing, once he was Uncas, the last warriors of this clan - Chingachkuk and his son Uncas. Demonstration of the turtle sign in front of Indians was an indicator of the new appearance of the great leader, the ancient laws demanded unquestioned obedience and recognition of appeared leader.

Setting aside the ritual ties between Mohicans and Delawares that are in relation due to the royal family and the black dice, the question is: what is the meaning of the symbol of a turtle in the Indian mythological matrix? “According to the legend of the Iroquois, at the beginning of Creation presiding deity had decided to plant a giant world tree in a primordial ocean. But it needed a strong support. Gathered animals at the Council had decided to take the ground

from the ocean bottom. When this problem was solved, there was the next question: where should it be planted arise. Turtle Hah-hu-nah agreed to take responsibility to support the universe. Dredged silt pieces, which gradually grew and formed the earth, were placed on its strong armor. According to another legend of the “Valam Olum”, the famous epic story of North American, at the ancient times, a powerful and huge snake, ringed the Earth to destroy all life, became spewing out endless streams of water from its mouth. The Great Hero named Nanabush, the ancestor of humans and animals, decided to save his dying children. To do this, he created a huge turtle, who is like a floating island. On her back people and animals took refuge of danger. This myth is completely analogous to the legends of world-creation, and turtle plays a role not only a support of the terrestrial firmament, but of the land itself” - wrote Evsukov V.V. (V.V.Evcukov, 1988, 169).

### Conclusions

Therefore, in the archetypal sense the turtle is the hypostasis of the land itself. She is a support, a pillar of life. In Chinese and Tunguska mythology the turtle is a symbol of eternity: in many Asian myths the Earth rests on the back of a gigantic turtle. Thus, the turtle is a symbol of reliability, stronghold, loyalty and tradition. It is no accident Uncas is marked with the clan symbol of the turtle Unamis, this is one of the highest symbols in the sacred heraldry of indigenous peoples of North America.

Thus Chingachkuk - The Great Serpent, is marked with a sign of the Serpent and the Eagle, which means connectivity with higher cult of the Indians of North and Central America - Quetzalcoatl. Uncas, his son, bears the sign of a more ancient and secret totem cult, no less universal than the Great Serpent – the sign of the cult of Turtles (mother-earth). These two Mohicans, according to the author, are the great leaders, who united the natives. Their mission was not only to unite all the Delawares but return them to the covenants of the past, the sacred cult of ancestors. By the will of the Great Spirit-Manitou they have the right to rule the destinies of entire tribal alliances, determining their political future. There is a background of the author’s strategy of J.F. Cooper as the English-speaking writer.

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