



MYTHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION IN THE STORIES BY THE WRITER NAZAR ESHONKUL (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE STORIES "TOBUT" (COFFIN) AND "AJR" (REWARD))

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Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: 10th May 2021 Accepted: 28th May 2021 Published: 30th June 2021</p>	<p>In this article, effective use of various types and forms of mythologism in Nazar Eshonkul's works has been studied on the example of the story "Sibizgha Volasi". Based on analyses it has been proven that the writer has created a new style in literature to expose the acts of despotic regime and its leaders by giving a modern spirit to legends that has never been found in the Uzbek storytelling, in general, in prose. The article demonstrates the writer's skill in using colours, details, symbols and images to bring modernity by putting only his own text in the fairy tale without changing the plot.</p>
<p>Keywords: Symbol, allegory, mythological scale, religious-mystical myth, parallel plot, mythological archetype, mythic story, literary criticism, artistic poetical time.</p>	

Literary scholars and critics have objectively and professionally analysed Nazar Eshonkulov's stories and his other works from the point of view of their success in the contemporary literary process, their artistic value and role in the world and Uzbek literature. More importantly, they focused on such aspects as symbolic details in the works, including the mystery of the pictures in the story "Maymun yetaklagan odam" (The Man Leading the Monkey). However, no research on the mythological characteristics of the writer's works has yet been addressed extensively or adequately. In our view, in each of the works of the writer, first of all, the importance is attached to mythical poetics and embodiment of images.

Mythological works can be interpreted and understood differently by anyone based on their own worldview, taste, and level. The reason for it is that mythologism is the language of symbols. And the symbol is able to withstand extensive and varied interpretations. F. Losev says about it: "... myth is not a scheme or allegory; it is a symbol. It is a symbol with a very complex and multilayer embodiment."¹

Based on the symbolic features of myths, K. Yung suggests that myths be interpreted as "the outcome of creative thinking" and emotion and experiences expressed in symbolic language.² Myth writers are remarkable with the fact that they had to name and describe all – the forces of nature, the surroundings, the world facing them, the birth and the death: they named the nameless world, nameless relations and nameless forces based on their own imaginations. Naming things in such a way developed the way of their thinking into the creative thinking. Yung thinks that mythological thought was the motivation and foundation for creative thinking. Subconscious experiences emerge in the form of symbols and figures, on which depends the creative aspect of myths.

We try to prove our opinion by interpreting the meanings of the mythological approaches and symbols in the stories "Tobut" (Coffin) and "Ajr" (Reward) by Nazar Eshonkulov, which were for the first time published in 1998.

The "Tobut" is closely linked to the writer's story "Maymun yetaklagan odam" in terms of the style, approach, theme, epoch and mythological environment. By the way, the hero of this story is also an old architect. We do not see the architect on the very first pages of the story, even he is not regarded as the hero of the work. In general, the city's architect appears in the story only in one or two cases. But from the early stages of the story, the reader begins to learn about his work and the results of his "creation": mysterious death takes over the remote provincial city, just like the epidemic. From these descriptions, the author begins to give the story a mythical essence. Later on, the city is described as an ancient mythical city through the language of the narrator who was taken to investigate the cause of

¹ A.F. Losev. "Dialectics of Myths". -p 21.

² Yung K.G. Architype and Symbol. – M., 1991. Yung K.G. Human and its symbols. — Serebryaniye niti, 2017 .

death. Everything in this place is mysterious and frightful. The whole city is full of fear: it is not a modern settlement but a kind of terrible mythical space. The Commission unanimously concludes that the cause of the death is not the epidemic. What is it then? Why, then, is the city suffering from death day after day?

Then, in the street, the narrator encounters a crazy man, the old man who once was an architect of the city and was in charge of its construction. Later, the narrator finds out that the old man designed the plan of the city in the form of a coffin. The narrator concludes that the reason for the death embracing the city is in its design in the form of a coffin.

The death in the story takes the character of a mythological fate, doom. In logic, it is unthinkable that the city was designed in the form a coffin, and as a result, causing death to the citizens. However, the author assures the reader of the artistic conditionality: the city turns into the embodiment of the regime and the environment. It was the architect who created this environment. Only then the old man, whom the citizens regard as just a mentally ill person, appears before our eyes in the form of an evil goddess.

The author makes a merciless sentence against his contemporaries living in the myth created by the Soviet ideology: **the city designed and constructed by goddess-like geniuses like this old man is condemned to death. Nothing can save it from death. Because it was constructed with an evil intention from the very beginning, and the death was written on its forehead as a curse!**

The city was designed to serve death, not life – survival. The place built with an evil intention serves only evil. In fact, “Tobut” is the continuation of the story “Maymun yetaklagan odam” by Nazar Eshonkulov, the version described from the other perspective. Because, logically, the artist and architect in both stories are actually one person. Both of them are creators, but their creativity serves evil – Satan. These two old men are the manifestation of the Soviet regime in man’s appearance, the regime that had enslaved the nations, the humanity and their freedom and esteem for seventy years. We can draw such a conclusion looking at the aged artist and mad architect in both stories.

Of course, searching for social meaning from both of these stories and being limited only to it would be just decreasing their essence. Like the story “Maymun yetaklagan odam”, the writer himself interprets the “Tobut” as a symbol of the emotional world and mental sufferings of an ordinary person who realized in the old age that he had not valued life and had spent it in vain, who had greatly suffered from it, realized looking back that he had wrongly planned from the very beginning and built so called the fortress of life and, therefore, got mad.¹ This is natural.

The story “Ajr”, which was written according to the chronology after the stories “Maymun yetaklagan odam” and “Tobut”, is also remarkable in its specific mythological language. In the same way, “Ajr” also leaves an impression that it is the continuation of these two stories. Only, now the reality takes a mystical character: the story narrates the hero’s “life” after death in the valley of rewards, who devoted himself to the service of the regime and committed a lot of evil deeds.

“... The path extended far along the field as a gold thread – the air was dim, the surroundings were scorching hot, and stars faded away twinkling – the air reeked of burnt smell, and the field with a lonely path crossing it in the middle was burning. A burly man going barefoot along the path was coughing hard and repeatedly by the acrid smoke, as if his lungs had been cut off. A pretty jacket was hanging on him, and the gilded buttons of his shirt were shining in the twinkle of fainting stars. On his shoulder, a small untidy-bearded old man with a robe on sat hanging his legs.”²

In terms of narration, the story differs greatly from the other stories: this time it is not a single narrator, but a number of ghosts tell the story of a hero who was going along the valley of rewards, who had sold his faith for the career, in order to serve the regime had committed patricide by pushing his father down the precipice considering that he was not suitable for the era any more, and the evil deeds of the reliable person and loyal soldier of the new era – a zombie official. This “official” caused the death of those ghosts as well. In addition to his father, he put to death those who might disagree with him and his authority, and who was free and independent. He even did not stop himself from raping the congenital blind girl. Now, after his death, the ghosts are leading him to the valley of rewards. Each of them has an account with the official. For now, the official is carrying his father’s ghost. Along a long and distant path, all the ghosts of the people he killed or caused their death are going to sit on his shoulders, and he is forced to carry these ghosts up to the gates of the hill. *“... There was no end to the path. The shuffling sounds of the footsteps were heard, and the stars flew on the path they were traveling. The son was walking his way, and the father sitting over his shoulders often looked at the end of the path. He seemed to be tired of sitting on his son’s shoulders. The field that the path crossed was empty, and the surrounding area was full of burnt bones that were scattering from their silhouette; infinite night hang over them as if dawn had forgotten to visit that place. And the path was endless ...”³*

The story seems to be extremely mystical at first glance. But the problem raised in it reminds of the near past, in particular, of the era when some people betrayed their own fathers, motherland and people for the sake of career

¹ N. Eshonkul. “Mendan “men”gacha-2”.

² N. Eshonkul. “Yalpiz hidi”.

³ N. Eshonkul. “Yalpiz hidi”.

and position, and of the ideologists of such a regime. It is a mystical revelation of the spiritual image of the Soviet regime. In the story, the writer turns the mystical mythology into a descriptive tool, a poetic element of the work, and, in a certain sense, achieves it.

The fact is that the roots of the problems raised in Nazar Eshonkulov's works, the tragedies of the society and the environment, and the tragic conclusions should be sought from the 80s of the past century, from the worldview of the intellectuals and their attitude towards society. In other words, the issues, problems and tragic interpretations raised in the writer's works that we have discussed above and during our research are all the reflection of the intellectuals of those times, their worldview, ideas, attitude towards society, and the inner scenes of the time.

Taking into account the moral degradation characteristic of this era and attempts to mass slavery and submission of human beings, A.Losev perceives the myth as a social necessity of the new era.¹ According to A.Losev, the history could not be ruled by politics, science, religion, intelligence and art any more: now it is ruled by the mythological forces consisting of geniuses with bloody swords who claim faithless eternity and have no mythological doctrine. A.Losev calls this situation as an "absolute mythological situation".

Naturally, the absolute mythological situation generates an absolutized way of mythological thought. In what things is "absolutized way of mythological thought" reflected? This kind of way of thinking, first of all, is seen in the human attitude towards reality like primitive people. As primitive people, contemporary way of thinking also turns into a prisoner, slave and puppet of reality. That is, the man does not have the power to influence the reality, and the weight of reality totally imprisons the man. The reality reminds of mythological thinking not only with its weight, but also with its manipulation as ancient goddesses, i.e. fascinating with its ideology, views and orders. Therefore, the despair and melancholy in these works should be sought not only from the literary style but also from the era.

It is well known that, in the 80s of the past century, the violation of values, history, national honour, pride, dignity, national revival, dreams of freedom, the brutal policy of the Soviet regime, the prohibition of centuries-old traditions like Navruz that turned into national holidays and negligence of the native language – all led the intelligentsia, in particular, the writers to come to hopeless conclusions. This disappointment, the weakness of human being in front of the environment, is the artistic expression of influential feelings and attitudes such as the comparison of the society to the coffin and condemnation of the people there to death. We can more clearly see the reflection of this period in other works where mythologism is masterfully used.

While analysing the mystical mythologism on the example of Thomas Eliot's works, the European writer and scientist D.H. Lawrence emphasized that the mystical mythologism has a great role in enriching the poetics of works, its meaning and influence, and showing the reality with its full potential. Especially, as Nazar Eshonkul has pointed out in his book "Ijod falsafasi. "Mendan mengacha-2" (Philosophy of creation. From me to me-2), "like his generations, Eliot searches for the answer to issues such as absurdity of life, the chaos and emptiness, and concludes that the main reason for the absurdity of human life is in his refusal of the God. Failure to believe in the Creator deprives man from his own self, essence, origin and supreme purpose of where he comes from and where he goes, leads him to chaos and emptiness. Whichever soul stops believing in the Creator, evil starts making its den in it and begins preparing a kingdom for itself. The struggle between the God and the Satan is a struggle of eternal Evil and Goodness".

From this point of view, the same analysis of mystical mythologism can be attributed to the writer's story "Ajr". The subsequent opinion of the writer about the poet's work is very characteristic of the story "Ajr", in other words, it serves to reveal the essence of the story. The poet says: **"The spiritual collapse characteristic of the 20th century is due to it. Man's alienation and even denial of God made man apart from the worldly bonds that bind him, separated man and left him alone, put his soul in the danger and threw it into the claws of bestial lower self."**²

To conclude, we did not bring this citation in vain. N. Eshonkul's views on the era, time, environment and human in his abovementioned two stories are in harmony with T. Eliot's views. This, of course, is related to the modernistic approach to a world that is dominant in both writers' works, to literature and modernistic worldview.

¹ A.F. Losev. "Dialectics of Myths".

² N. Eshonkul. "Ijod falsafasi. Mendan "mengacha-2". 2018.