
CONFERENCE ARTICLE

THE UNIVERSALITY OF MYTH AND FABLE

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the connection of artistic thinking with myth and the tradition of Uzbek fable writing. It reflects on the universality of myth as a genre and on the concept of its transition into the fable form.

KEYWORDS

Myth, image, character, dialectics, style, metamorphosis, globalism.

INTRODUCTION

Humanity's artistic thinking has been developing and progressing for thousands of years. Whoever has come to understand the truth of life, if he is a creator, undertakes to reveal the mysteries of the world in a distinctive way through subtle feelings. In this sense, the tradition initiated by Aesop has not lost its significance even today. Mythological transformation and imagery constitute the essential core of the poetics of the fable. Myth has many diverse aspects connected with the fable, and the fable likewise has many links with myth, all of which relate the world and human beings to one another. Just as day changes into night and night into day, so in almost all living beings and objects on our planet we see the myth of truth, the human phenomenon, the desires of the heart, dreams, losses, separations, betrayals, thefts, and deceptions all interwoven. Human beings are children of logic. Once a person attains self-awareness, he lives within the limits of logic. It is a proven fact that reason and intellect, feeling and emotion complement one another.

The fable is a universal genre. One of the most ancient genres of literature is myth. The appearance of this form in mixed manifestations across various genres has prepared the ground for the emergence of many different kinds of works today. If we take into account that the need to understand the world arose on the basis of the first human being and the earliest primitive views, the essence of the matter becomes clear. "The need for mythological depiction in literature has never diminished in any age. The foundation of Alisher Navoi's works is built on myth. The great poet infused myth with his own ideas, his research, and his doctrine about humanity. The mythological theories that arose in Europe in the nineteenth century initiated literature's renewed turn toward myth. Nietzsche was the first to study myth and the human being as a unified whole. Freud, Jung, and Adler laid the foundations for a new theory of mythology and a new approach to myth. This theory firmly connected myth with literature: according to it, myth is the reflection of the subconscious emotional experiences of our ancestors based on the language of symbols. Freud regarded myth as a manifestation of 'subconscious sensual drives,' Jung as a manifestation of 'collective subconscious feelings,' and Fromm as a manifestation of 'subconscious impulses toward intellectual activity.'"

Indeed, by the twentieth century, the saturation of literature with neomyth, together with the socio-psychological issues

seeping out from the depths of the individual heart, led to the emergence of new myths and to their enrichment, as in the fable, with events worthy of certain moral instruction. Myth and fable are inseparable phenomena. The outlines of depiction within them are measured by the way in which the writer or poet approaches the problem. At the basis of every expression lie certain experiences and their causes and consequences. The essence of myth reveals the human striving to understand and to know. Thus, for human beings, myth makes visible the beliefs, faith, and attitudes of their ancestors toward concepts. The fable affirms the stability of that allegorically and metaphorically depicted form which wisely illustrates these theoretical principles.

Myth is a universal phenomenon for all ages and demonstrated itself as an inseparable link of epic tradition both in ancient Greek culture and in the literature of the Turkic peoples. If we take a deep look at the works of Alisher Navoi, Babur, and many of our classical writers, it becomes evident that mythological transformation is a universal phenomenon. "It should be said that although myths were created in periods when human consciousness was less developed, they contain reflections on many things that even modern scholars have not yet fully understood, and those very prophecies are only now being realized. It is no secret that the divine and powerful weapons in myths, mirrors showing distant lands, flying giants and carpets, ultimately led to modern airplanes, television, and the like. Therefore, the magical events, phenomena, and objects in myths cannot simply be called expressions of unconsciousness; they are the product of reason and intellect unique to humankind. Myths provided names for things in human thought, and through those names humanity rose to the peaks of great thinking. According to legend, Adam became dearer than all the angels because he learned the names of all things. The symbols in myths, in turn, stimulated the creation of art."

Consequently, as Professor J. Eshonqulov has noted, mythological thinking has served not only in prose but also in dramatic and lyrical works to strengthen its position and open wide paths for further development. In modern prose, the growing accumulation of symbolic metaphors moving from the short story to the novella and from the novella to the novel demonstrates the great literary influence of myths on genre and form. For just as there is no literature without myth and no myth

without literature, so too it proves the immense influence of absurdism and psychological experiences that have been absorbed into our spirit since the time of Adam and Eve. Especially in the mythology of the twentieth century, the emergence of these elements alongside power, ideas, progress, and worldwide inventions is worthy of admiration. It is evident in the contribution of the generation of James Joyce, who completely renewed this modification and helped it develop as a distinctive methodology of interpretation. Within every reality perceived in human consciousness, the predominance of mythological views becomes apparent. The echo of socio-psychological life at the beginning of the twentieth century in people's experiences also led to a considerable expansion of the formula of artistic works. These processes of growth and change proved that the generation of Joyce produced a labyrinthine mode of expression that is still difficult and complex for us to fully comprehend.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, writers in different parts of world literature, especially in Latin America, Europe, and America, did not turn to mythological interpretation without reason. They followed the path of typifying the myths they themselves had created. These were depicted with a remarkable distinctiveness from spiritual and social experiences, and a person needed great inner preparedness to understand the codes, strokes, and signals contained within them. In many of these works, the harmony of faith and creativity was reflected, and their authors early came to understand that there was no other world beyond the artistic world they had created, as well as how complex the formulas of life were, constantly changing and taking on new shades with each passing hour. While the realist fable writers of the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries served to strengthen a great ethics of depiction, by the twentieth century this mode of representation began to seem outdated. From then on, writers chose not to express an idea through a broad epic scale, but rather through compact forms, writing prose works that could answer the questions in their hearts. This tendency gradually turned into a concept. The Russian critic E. Meletinsky called it "unconscious poetic creation." When the Latin American writer and philosopher Jorge Luis Borges drew attention to the idea that "the beginning and the end of literature consist of myth," he emphasized that it was necessary to rely on precisely this criterion. As standards were renewed, human imagination and the distinctive ways of perceiving and expressing the world also became more diverse.

In Aesop's philosophical views from many thousands of years ago, mythological universalism was further developed in a new way among the Turkic peoples between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, leaving behind instructive fables that would prevent humankind from going astray. The universal mythology in Aesop's fables later became more complex in the works of Navoi, Babur, Agahi, and Gulkhaniy on the basis of religious and enlightenment-oriented concepts.

The animal imagery in Aesop's fables helps us understand such concepts as human character, way of life, living conditions, fate, affection, and loyalty as they appear in real life:

"The shepherd let his goats out to graze. After a while he noticed that his goats were grazing together with wild goats. He was pleased, and when evening came, he shut them all into his cave. The next day, because the weather was bad, he could not take the goats out to pasture as usual and had to feed them in the cave. The shepherd gave his own goats only enough fodder so that they would not die, while he poured out plenty for the wild goats in the hope of taming them. The following day, when the weather cleared, the goats rushed off toward the mountains. The shepherd began scolding them as ungrateful creatures who did not appreciate kindness: 'Did I not feed you even better than my own goats?' The wild goats replied: 'That is precisely why it seemed better for us to stay away from you. We met you only yesterday, yet you fed us better than your old goats. That means if new ones join you tomorrow, you will value them more than

us as well!'

In short, do not rush to befriend those who prefer new friends over old ones, for when they gain newer friends, you too will become one of the old ones."

If we pay attention to the essence and content of this fable, before our eyes appears the plot of a work that is written in very simple language but possesses substantial meaning. The dialogic interaction between the shepherd and the goats gradually moves toward a resolution through the wild goats. In essence, as we noted in earlier chapters, it is appropriate here to keep in mind the comparison between the genuine and the false. At this point, the fable makes it clear that the most dangerous kind of friend is the one who has been close to you, lived with you in difficult times, shared life with you, and then abandons you when a new friend appears. The mythological universalism in the fable enables us to understand the truth of life even more deeply. Although such plot events are encountered very often in world literature, they seem like the logical continuation of the tradition initiated by Aesop.

Plato believed that literature exerts a powerful influence on the human spirit, especially on the spirit of a developing individual. For this reason, in his view, myths depicting the horrors of the kingdom of Hades (the other world) hinder the formation of warriors who would not fear death if they believed in such things. Accordingly, regarding myths containing such scenes, he argued that "we should require those who undertake to tell them not to condemn indiscriminately everything that exists in Hades, but rather to praise it; for in such condemnation they are not right, and besides, it is not useful for future warriors." Thus, the genres of myth and fable, accustomed to penetrating all layers of life, demonstrate how complex the scope of life's contradictions truly is. Plato's views, in particular, were reflected in epics and dramas in ancient Greek literature. This is because in ancient Greek literature myth stood apart with its own distinctive criteria of interpretation and contributed to the development of other genres as well, helping to understand the character and spirit of kings and court officials, and showing the necessity of comedies and satirical works that would give readers not only gloom but also delight and enjoyment. The existing doctrines observed in world mythology also changed the architectonics of the fable. As a result, the nature of myth and fable in Alisher Navoi's works became more colorful. This shows that at their core stands the phenomenon of the perfect human being and that reason and intellect always remain relevant.

It is no secret that the harmony of myth and fable has from ancient times appeared in various genres created by our ancestors. A great many of Alisher Navoi's works, while connected with the animal world, in fact reflect the human phenomenon. In the works of Jalaliddin Rumi, Abdurahman Jami, and our other classical writers, the fable was used with extremely subtle artistic nuances. Much was also done to reform society, change people's consciousness and thinking, and ensure greater openness and transparency in the use of new ideas. At this point a question arises: why, in that period, were critical thinking and firm will not interpreted openly and directly? Why did they produce more complex fragments in symbols, metaphors, and allegorical images? In answer to the question of why this happened, it may be said that because of the many positive efforts made by Amir Temur in building a centralized Timurid state, disorder did not occur in the country. Amir Temur's determination, courage, and energy in governing the state helped put an end to the roots of such problems. Only after Amir Temur's death did fragmentation, mutual struggles for the throne, and internal decay of the Timurid kingdom lead to pointless bloodshed and the weakening of mutually beneficial strategic cooperation. In this respect, even during the reign of the patron of science and learning, Mirzo Ulugbek, whose life was marked by forty years of kingship, peaceful life was disrupted as a result of disagreements between father and son. Understanding this well, Alisher Navoi wrote large-scale epic

works corresponding to the good deeds of Husayn Bayqara in the path of reform and in firmly holding the banner of justice. Because of assassination attempts and bloodshed directed against Navoi, Navoi himself became one in need of protection, longing for a true friend. Thus, as a product of this very mood, the genre of the fable became even more refined. Cracks appeared in people's kindness and mutual trust. It revealed that those considered ideal people were, in fact, no one special. The internal structure and rules of the genre created a strong basis for understanding the truth of life. In particular, the fact that each narrative in Qisasi Rabghuzi contains several separate plot-based stories makes it close to the structure of works like Zarbulmasal. Even considered separately, they may be regarded as independent plot-based works. The fact that the stories in Qisasi Rabghuzi are built in the form of a "story within a story" or a "framing plot" also shows that they continue the traditions of Eastern epic works.

If we pay attention, many fables had been created in world fable literature before the twentieth century. In the works of the Russian fabulist Ivan Krylov, the domination of Russians over other peoples, questions of freedom and submission, and the spiritual and social life of human beings were depicted. Within every animal world there are tricksters, traitors, greedy, vile, hypocritical, and deceitful creatures. Ivan Krylov wrote his fables in verse. His fables continued the creative pursuits of earlier fabulists while giving them a new form and appearance, often leaving it to the reader to draw the "moral of the story." Especially in such fables as *The Monkey and the Glasses* and *The Fox and the Goat*, the panorama of social and psychological problems in society comes even more clearly to the surface. This criterion becomes even more colorful in the writer's explorations. It is revealed how people deceive one another, and for the sake of personal interest commit all kinds of baseness, wickedness, flattery, and hypocrisy, constantly bringing each other down. In the face of every trial of life, human beings are driven into all kinds of thoughts. They often pass through life making mistakes in knowing who is a friend, who is a true beloved, and who is an enemy. Such qualities as tenderness of heart and the capacity to wound the heart always serve as lessons for people. The role of the fable in reforming society is incomparable. If there is a reader who reads and understands it, and understands and reflects upon it, then the essence of the matter becomes even clearer.

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