

NEO-MYTHICAL MOTIVES AND CHARACTERS IN ORALKHAN BOKEI'S STORIES

(On the Stories “Zhetim bota” (“Orphaned Baby Camel”), “Kar Kyzy” (“Snow Girl”))

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Abstract: Neo-mythologism, characteristic of Oralkhan Bokey's prose, is a widespread phenomenon in world literature. Neo-mythical motives and characters in his novels are the artistic structure, distinguished by their new features and originated from the ancient myths. Free breathing of Kazakh literature in the space of modernism can be seen by neo-myths in Oralkhan Bokey's prose. Neo-mythical motives and characters in Oralkhan Bokey's stories such as “Zhetim bota” (“Orphaned baby camel”) and “Kar kyzy” (“Snow girl”) are considered in the given article.

Keywords: Literary process, cultural phenomenon, myth, neo-mythologism, neo-myth, source, orphaned baby camel, Akbota, Snow girl, symbol, Konkay.

INTRODUCTION

Akbota who could not come together with the civilization time and alienated spirit, leading her baby camel on a leash is a figure presenting original purity and impeccable nature. Her leaving for the eternal journey on foot through the surface of the sea is the assumption of continuous connection and indestructible bridge between the past and the present. Almazhan, who has become a snow girl as the result of the cruel old man Konkay's oppression, approximates the distance between myth and reality as much as possible. Under incessant longing for the past and bygone, there is nostalgia for the beginning of mind and heart. This is evident from the special attention of the other heroes to Snow girl. These two characters are described as the assumption of eternity and beauty of spirit, impeccable purity and great qualities of humanism.

RESEARCH METHODS AND MATERIALS

The aim of this article is to determine the neo-mythical motives and characters as the result of the connection of modern prose and mythology in Oralkhan Bokey's stories, the Kazakh writer of the XX century; on this basis to show the pattern of succession of myth and literature in the literary text, taking into account that the myth is the source of all cultures; to convince that the author's myth or neo-myths

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are the main feature of Oralkhan Bokey's works by analyzing them, and to make new conclusions.

Methods of analysis, synthesis and hermeneutics are used in the work.

As a result of analyzing Oralkhan Bokey's stories, the methods of presenting neo-mythological features, mythical motives and characters from the writer's position were identified. Akbota in the story "Orphaned baby camel" and Snow girl in "Snow Girl" are considered the characters with a new feature from the author's myth or neo-myth.

DISCUSSION

Demonstration of knowledge, typical of mythological thinking in literature, is a phenomenon that exists in the literary process.

Equipping the new paradigm of art in the new stage of development of literature and culture is natural. In the course of such investigations, determining the direction of new values is carried out, synthesizing the experience of past epochs. During the development of literature, as a result of ancient spirituality and initial outlook, mythical motives are purposefully involved in the events of the artistic work.

For example, the mythical motives in the works of Thomas Mann, E-T-A. Hoffman, J.W. Goethe, F. Kafka, A. Akhmatova, A. Block, M. Zhumabayev are the basis for discussion of the connection between myth and written literature.

The thoughts about the myth told in the Italian philosopher George Vico's famous "Foundation of a new science about the general nature of nations" are so valuable. Here the philosopher considers the myth a cultural phenomenon and the source of culture (Vico, 1994:56). We can observe that the role of "sources" occupies a special place in the cultural development, because literature has a direct and indirect connection with myths in any century. As an example we can give the height of a tree and green leaves, that is, life is directly connected with the root that gives power. Similarly, myth is a primary source of culture in its development.

Generalizing the opinions and conclusions of scientists-mythologists we talk that "the myth is the starting point of truth and the pursuit of human consciousness to recognize the truth", and that "the definition of myth-tectonics of literary and artistic works and mythopoetical problems have become a constant object of literary science" (Aymukhambet, 2016:9-10). Studies on mythopoetics, neo-mythologism in world literature are distinguished by substantiation for new ideas and opinions, and continue the existence of mythological school.

Literature researchers, critics who write about the works of Oralkhan Bokey (1943 - 1993), outstanding Kazakh writer of the XX century, in particular, of the Soviet ideology time, draw attention to the fact that the writer often refers to the mythical motives. This peculiarity was not close enough to the "political demands" of literature and "the process of socialist realism" at that time. However, this

individuality of the author identified him. Well-known critic and academician S. Kirabaev “Oralkhan uses a lot of symbols, folk legends in his novels. Developing the content of the work by realistic characters he refers mostly to the guesses (hints) and mythical stories in using art form. Probably this method is necessary to describe a young man’s dream, feelings in an elevated motive. “It is true that including mythical fairy-stories and images in the work and desire to discover the spirit of a fighter and humanism with their help are found in the world literature. Such models can be used as a type of artistic description of life” (Kirabaev, 1988:190).

Thus, the peculiarity of O. Bokey’s works in different years that stand out from the work of other Kazakh writers is the description of the mythical motives in harmony with contemporary reality. The phenomenon of neo-mythologism, typical of the world literature at the beginning of the XX century, became the basis in Kazakh writer O. Bokey’s works. Using neo-mythologism, characteristic to the literature of modernism and postmodernism, in the literary process of “Soviet space” was the novelty and artistic regularity. The works of Irish writer James Joyce, German writer Thomas Mann, recognized as outstanding representatives of “Mythological novels” of that period, are important in the mythological themes in new content and in various forms. In James Joyce’s novel “Ulysses” we can see the “silhouette” of ancient Greek Odyssey, in Thomas Mann’s “The Magic Mountain” we draw attention to its mythical plot about the singer-narrators Tannhauser, who spent seven years on the magic mountain of the goddess Venus. The novel “Joseph and his brothers” reminds the ancient Egyptian, Biblical plots. We know that W. Faulkner’s “The sound and the fury”, F.Kafka’s “The trial”, “Castle”, “The Metamorphosis”, Mikhail Bulgakov’s “Master and Margarita” have neo-mythological characterization and mythical motives in different degrees. This artistic experience of world literature is also peculiar to Kazakh writer O. Bokey’s works.

The main character Gregor Samsa in “The Metamorphosis” written by F.Kafka, a modernist writer of the early XX century, is transformed into an insect, as well as Oralkhan Bokey’s hero in “Atau Kere” (“The last meal”), who turns into blue horsefly because of his narrow-mindedness and die from the hands of a girl in red dress on the river bank. Not only can these two examples show the use of a mythical transformation motive in artistic and ideological purposes. We can meet such motives of contemporary literature in various forms.

O. Bokey’s stories “Orphaned baby camel” and “Snow Girl” are the works where “mythical motive” is most obvious.

The story “Orphaned baby camel” was first published in 1984 in the writer’s collection of stories “The winters here are long”.

In the above-mentioned story the events occur around the architect Taszhan and Akbota, the girl leading an orphaned baby camel on a leash. According to Taszhan, Akbota is a mysterious girl, who saves the relationship of human and nature from the

contradictions. Akbota's worldview cannot perceive the developed civilization, and her standing apart from it is in harmony with the old "mythical time". In the story she is closer to nature than humans. In the initial stage of mythical consciousness there was no discord between human and nature (The law of identity), and in this story, we notice Akbota's mythologized image. By Akbota's relationship with the environment author assumes the difficulty of violations of the law of equality for human life in the civilization era, that the struggle between good and evil does not stop, on the contrary, exacerbates. The fact that the development of science and technology not only facilitates human need but also brings disaster to the nature, the source of these people's life, is reproduced by the character intuition.

At the beginning of the story a modern character of the novel, looking out of the window of the hotel in the city near the sea, sees a mysterious girl, leading a baby camel on a leash.

"... the destructive civilization and the girl in a blue dress, walking slowly and leading the baby camel on a leash along the immense sea, without looking even with the corner of her eye at the high-rise hotel "Intercontinental", where he stayed. She is walking with a special elegance, graceful and soft movement peculiar to the Kazakh girl, not paying attention to anything, dissolving into the skyline" (Bokeyev, 1984: 371).

Here, today's life is demonstrated within the booming civilization and life in the past within the mythical consciousness. Taszhan is a representative of civilization and Akbota with the orphaned baby camel on a leash is a representative of the mythological era. The writer gives the mythical nature of Akbota's actions, deeds and behavior: *"She is like a beautiful girl, appeared out of the blue sea with her camel"- or "What a girl? She is as a beauty of Solomon, the owner of water, released from the Atyrau. Walking slowly, with a sliding step"* (Bokeyev, 1984: 387). This girl seems *"the only person, who draws the line between destructive civilization and wide sea, protects and prevents contractions between human power and natural charm"* After the first conversation with Taszhan this world seems alien and disturbing for *"a mysterious girl with her camel, dissolving in the space"* (Bokeyev, 1984: 397).

Her feelings were in harmony with the mythical space. *"... I would have died a long time ago, I'm waiting for my parents who went to sea to fish and did not return. I believe, one day they will be coming out of the water and call me"* (Bokeyev, 1984: 419).

"I dream to walk along the Atyrau with my baby camel. Tell me that it's possible?"

"My sense of sadness can bring back my parents out of seven layers of the earth and the seventh heaven. The sea itself says that they are alive, listen ... Yesterday I was walking under water for a long time, asked the fish if there is news from my parents, but they are silent ..." (Bokeyev, 1984: 418).

The above-given passages are monologues that disclose Akbota's nature as "a neo-mythical hero". Mythological thinking is a concept inherent to the ancient era and it stands out for its harmonization with modern technocratic consciousness. "*Too smart era*" (Taszhan's thoughts) made a strong impression on Akbota, who recognizes all the objects and phenomena of nature as a conscious spirit. That is "*technosphere won biosphere*" (Bokeyev, 1984: 422).

Akbota's life within the mythical consciousness and mythological thinking is very tragic. When the unity of man and nature is broken and falls into contradiction, all the sacred becomes the worthless fantasy that cannot find its place and will just disappear in the end. Considering Akbota's image, mysteriousness of her understanding and behavior in the mythical frame, we can note that the phenomenon of mythologism in modern literature is conditional. When the writer is looking for answers to the questions about the serious problems of mankind and wants to bring readers his deep philosophical conclusion, he writes within the mythological consciousness and mythological thinking which are important layers of human consciousness.

At the end of the story "Orphaned baby camel" the author goes to the mythical description again:

"On the golden path over the sea Akbota is walking slowly, leading her camel on a leash".

"The girl with her orphaned baby camel on a leash is walking on the surface of the water with the ringing of her jewelry, woven into the braid. She is walking away to eternity".

"The immense sea waves as a grateful mother who is happy to see her returning daughter alive and well" (Bokeyev, 1984: 426).

The eternity of human spirit and acceptance of nature as the spirit are characteristic to mythical consciousness. Akbota's walking on the sea surface does not indicate to her way to death, but her return to nature. The immense sea in the writer's narration resembles the mother. In the ancient Turkic mythology Mother Earth is given as a woman. O.Bokey takes away his character from the concept "die" and uses the expression "*has gone along the golden path on the surface of the sea*". In the mythical knowledge water is the realm of the dead, as well as the border between this and the other world. Synthesizing the ancient knowledge about the earth and water, the writer creates the whole indivisible concept. Akbota is removed from this world and it is not given as her death, but not finding the harmony with the environment. She goes to the old world, close to her spirit. An orphaned baby camel is an artistic detail. The camel, considered the best kind of livestock, is similar to the orphaned spirit of helpless and gentle soul.

The nature and knowledge, stored in the consciousness about studying nature, is constantly updated. This relationship between man and nature in the writer's use

is reflected in understanding the human ideals direction. Akbota, the hero of the ancient mythical time, affects the inner world of Tashan, the hero of civilization. He considers that *“Akbota was born too late”, “a person of the eighteenth century ...”, “she is like a flower grown up on the concrete”*. He also thinks that *“the girl, who became a desire to light period, turned into a bird of love, fluttered and flew away. Oh Akbota! White bird of my youth. I am happier than the others because I saw my angel in Akbota’s image”* (Bokeyev, 1984: 423).

At the culmination of the story the modern hero expresses his feeling: *“Our planet ... can be saved by a special love of the Almighty’s daughter, unknown to us. She flies at any place of space”*. According to the mythical narrations, even not this motive, we can say that the basis for the emergence of this idea exists. It is known that in ancient myths all beings and phenomena have their patrons or shrines, and living beings have their idols. These myths are described as spiritual ones of primitive society (Kaskabasov, 2014: 3).

The daughter of the Almighty in Oralkhan Bokey’s works is a renewed image of female goddesses, women-rulers, mysterious fairies from ancient Egyptian, Greek, Celtic, Turkic myths, that is, new characters of new myths from old myths.

“We talk about the spirit-patrons in the myths of primitive society as the powers of nature that have turned into people, in other words, the characters possessing the power of nature. They may be personified as the lord of mountains, wind, sun, water, stone, lakes, etc.” says S. Kaskabasov (Kaskabasov, 2014:15). The daughter of the Almighty in this work is also represented as a patron. The similarity is that any creature has its patron. This knowledge originates from the mythology of spirit-patrons. The difference is that the daughter of the Almighty is not the patron of creatures and phenomena, but the keeper of the whole earth by her love, which is the notion in human’s spiritual world. Here we can see the writer’s humanitarian mission. We noted that there is no mythical motive concerning the daughter of the Almighty. In other words, her image is the writer’s mythical creativity.

The writer’s another story we view is “Snow Girl”. The first version of this story was published in 1978 in the book “An salady shagyldar” (“Singing dunes”). Later it was rewritten with new characters and events, and in 1984 this version was included in the book “Bizdin jakta kys uzak” (“The winters here are long”) published in “Zhalyn” publishing house.

There are similarities and differences between Akbota in “Orphaned baby camel” and Snow girl in “Snow girl”. These two characters, embodying such concepts as kindness and purity, beneficence that complement the heroes of modern time, who have experienced the oppression of “civilization era”.

There were several mythical narrations based on the idea that the body lives beyond the soul, which is typical of mythical consciousness. One of them is division of one person into two or three. According to the religious mythology, two angels

are sitting on both sides of a man. One of them leads to evil and the other to good. Based on this belief, romantics created the motives about human pair, that is, “the second person”. Relying on them, O.Bokey imposes different qualities and views of one person on three characters. For example, Nurzhan, Nur and Zhan are three characters.

In the last edited version of the writer’s story the characters are called differently. They are Nurzhan, Amanzhan and Bakhytzhan. The ratio of these three characters of realistic character to the myth is displayed during their trip to Aiyrtau (mountains). These lines are taken as an epigraph: *“From somewhere far away ... among the dunes of snow a girl’s sad song is heard”*.

The myth about Snow girl (we decided to call it a myth, Zh.A.) is told as the truth. *“It is said that a certain “Snow girl” has woken up. This is either for good or disaster”* (Bokeyev, 1984: 242).

“If you see “Snow girl” send our regards. We have enough thirst for these three years. Her resentment at an old man can destroy the whole nation”, said the chief of department jokingly” (Bokeyev, 1984: 244).

In the story all the events, connected to Snow girl, is enigmatic and mysterious. She is (Snow girl) appears to Nurzhan between dream and reality. *“... Now, oh my god ... here is she, bypassing the tractor in a long white dress and singing her sad song ...”, “poor guy did not know that no one except him had the opportunity to hear this sad and mysterious sound of magic song ...”* (Bokeyev, 1984: 257). The words in a mysterious whisper make this sensitive young man to bow to this mystery.

In the moment when Nurzhan was freezing and dying, he saw Snow girl in his dream, she woke him.

“Get up, get up, man, it is morning, the sun has come out - she begged. - Who are you? A person or an angel ... – he said, hardly moving his lips. I am Snow Girl” (Bokeyev, 1984: 323).

At the end of the story Snow girl woke up Nurzhan and saved him from freezing. The other freezing young men Amanzhan and Bakhytzhan in their dreams also saw the girls dear to them and died very young (Bokeyev, 1984: 312-321). The herdsman’s daughter, who comes to Amanzhan and the girl with an umbrella in Bakhytzhan’s dream are not from this world. In the description of those two dying men appearance of these girls from another world and calling the young men with them are appropriate to the story. The writer skillfully harmonizes this event with the mythical knowledge, where the soul and the spirit are eternal and convinces the reader of this. Since the spirit of the girl with an umbrella and the herdsman’s daughter are from another world, they call Amanzhan and Bakhytzhan over there, and the spirit of Snow girl from this world wakes up Nurzhan. This is the clearest and precise mythical motive in this story. The motive of Snow girl-Almazhan in the writer’s description indicates the unity of mysterious nature and human life.

The motive of Snow girl resembles the special nature of mythical characters. The mythologist M. Eliade said: “The characters of myths are supernatural beings. They are known as they act in legendary times, “the beginning of all beginnings” (Eliade, 2014: 235). Myths reveal their creative beginning and discover the sacredness (or supernaturalism) of their activities” (Kaskabasov, 2014: 19).

Nurzhan listens to the story about Snow girl again from an old man, who lives in the northern part of the Aiyrtau mountains. This story is spread because of the disappearance of a girl, who had been subjected to violence by Konkay: *“This girl turned into a snow girl. In winter she wanders in the mountains and sings, in summer she goes under the earth”* (Bokeyev, 1984: 328). After meeting with Almazhan this story has an entirely different character. It appears that Snow girl in Nurzhan’s dream is Almazhan. The habitat of Snow girl is the northern part of Aiyrtau.

“- Is that you who woke me up when I was lying in the snow hut and freezing? - It’s not me. This is my protector, that is, my phantom. That night, I missed you, thought a lot. I put on skis, wandered in the mountains and sang. Although I was here, I sent my phantom to you” (Bokeyev, 1984: 357).

Here the mythical knowledge does not lose its importance. Snow girl again occurs in the story about Almazhan. In the content of the story such phrase as *“Snow girl’s sad song is heard from a distance”* is repeated from time to time, and after Almazhan’s story *“not far ... nearby Snow girl’s sad song is heard”* (Bokeyev, 1984: 358). Conventionally, Nurzhan enters into the world of legends (mythical world) from usual (real) life. Konkay, who lives in the southern part of Aiyrtau, is the image of evil (violence, oppression), and the old man, who lives in the northern part, is an image of kindness (compassion, care). Snow girl is a representative of the spirit that suffers from evil and finds protection in kindness. Konkay, as well as that old man, lives away from people. But their way of life and attitudes are quite different. As the writer says, *“The solution of the mysteries lies in the concepts of Space and Loneliness”* (Serikkaliev, 1984:114), when we look at multilayer contradictions of human soul, living in the space of life, we turn to the ancient knowledge, mythical motive. “The soul” of Snow girl-Almazhan, in particular, is the spirit of people who suffer from oppression and become closer to nature. According to critic E. Amanshaev, “Snow Girl”, “Orphaned baby camel” and others are moral and ethical symbols, the ideal sparks of life that do not find their place in the human soul and “civilization”, flashing in the distance, among the mirages, in the water and on the coast, or “the beauty that civilization drives out” (Amanshaev, 2001:110).

The myth about Snow girl is the author’s creation. Although there is a similar legend among people, there is no history about Snow girl. As for the popular legend, six daughters of a rich man got lost on the way to the pasture, and asked old man Konkay to help them. He shows them the wrong way. Suddenly there comes a cold, and the girls become almost frozen. Thus, those six girls turned into birds. The

smallest becomes a cuckoo. She loses one of her boots, so the cuckoo's one leg is red. The cuckoo herself does not incubate her eggs, leaving them in the nests of her five sisters. In the Kazakh folklore there are several variants of the myth about the girl, who becomes a cuckoo.

One of the reasons for taking this myth as the basis of the story about Snow girl is the history of Konkay, who pointed the girls the wrong way. In the story the old man Konkay is an evil-doer. The episode that reveals the mythical nature of Snow girl at the beginning of the story is *"from afar, from the snowy dunes snow girl's sad song is heard"*. There are different stories about Snow girl told by the characters of the story. Snow girl is a mythical and symbolic image to reflect the writer's idea and philosophical conclusions.

As the neo-myth characters, Akbota and Snow girl present the writer's position. These two characters that seem to be defeated in the clash of the archaic values and civilization, in fact, are superior and excellent people. Snow girl, who has become a legend all over the Altai and Akbota, who walks on the wild waves of the Caspian-Khazar Sea, are the image-symbols, pointing the way in the endless battle between good and evil. In the Kazakh fairy tales there are some gifted heroes as Koltauysar (lake drier), Sakkulak (keen ear), Zhelayak (fast runner), Kyragy (keen eye) (from the fairy tales "Er Tostik", "Kun astyndagy Kunekey kyz" (Beautiful Kunikey living under the sun), who become friends, support, help, point the way and change the main characters' lives, who go out a long way in an unknown direction.

The heroes of the myth, Akbota the daughter of the Almighty and Snow girl, created by O.Bokey, demonstrate the humanistic idea as neo-mythological character. They are the main characters that make the mythical atmosphere of these two works we describe.

In our article "Mythopoetic structure of Chingiz Aitmatov's works" about mythopoetic images in contemporary literature, we analyzed the important artistic and aesthetic features of ancient myths in the structure of artistic works in the view of universal humanistic purpose (Aymukhambet, 2015:11-15). The goal of each writer is to create his new work by combining myth and modern life, and O.Bokey is the writer who reached the top of this skill.

The main theme in Oralkhan Bokey's works is the relationship of a man with nature and society. In addition to the analyzed works, there are such stories as "Kerbugy" ("Fallow deer"), "Bura" (Male camel), "Aypara-ana" ("Aypara mother"), "Muztau" (Ice mountain), "Saitan kopir" ("The devil's bridge"), etc. where the myths serve to reveal this eternal theme.

The mythical motives of modern literature have a new character and content. We consider that the development, expansion of mythic themes in modern works is conventionally in a symbolic sense, and we analyze mythologism in O.Bokey's prose from this point of view. We believe that the writer's paying much attention

to mythical motives is a way to tell some truth, forbidden in the Soviet era covertly, and we appreciate this as the writer's skill.

CONCLUSION

The ancient mythical stories in modern prose are perceived through new prisms and distinguished by the fact that they raise social status in society, universal and humanistic problems. A new form of neo-mythologism in literature shows that the problem of neo-mythologism has importance in the development of all art.

Neo-mythologism, characteristic of Oralkhan Bokey's prose, is a widespread phenomenon in world literature. Neo-mythical motives and characters in his novels are the artistic structure, distinguished by their new features and originated from the ancient myths. Free breathing of Kazakh literature in the space of modernism can be seen by neo-myths in Oralkhan Bokey's prose.

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